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MARCH 2015

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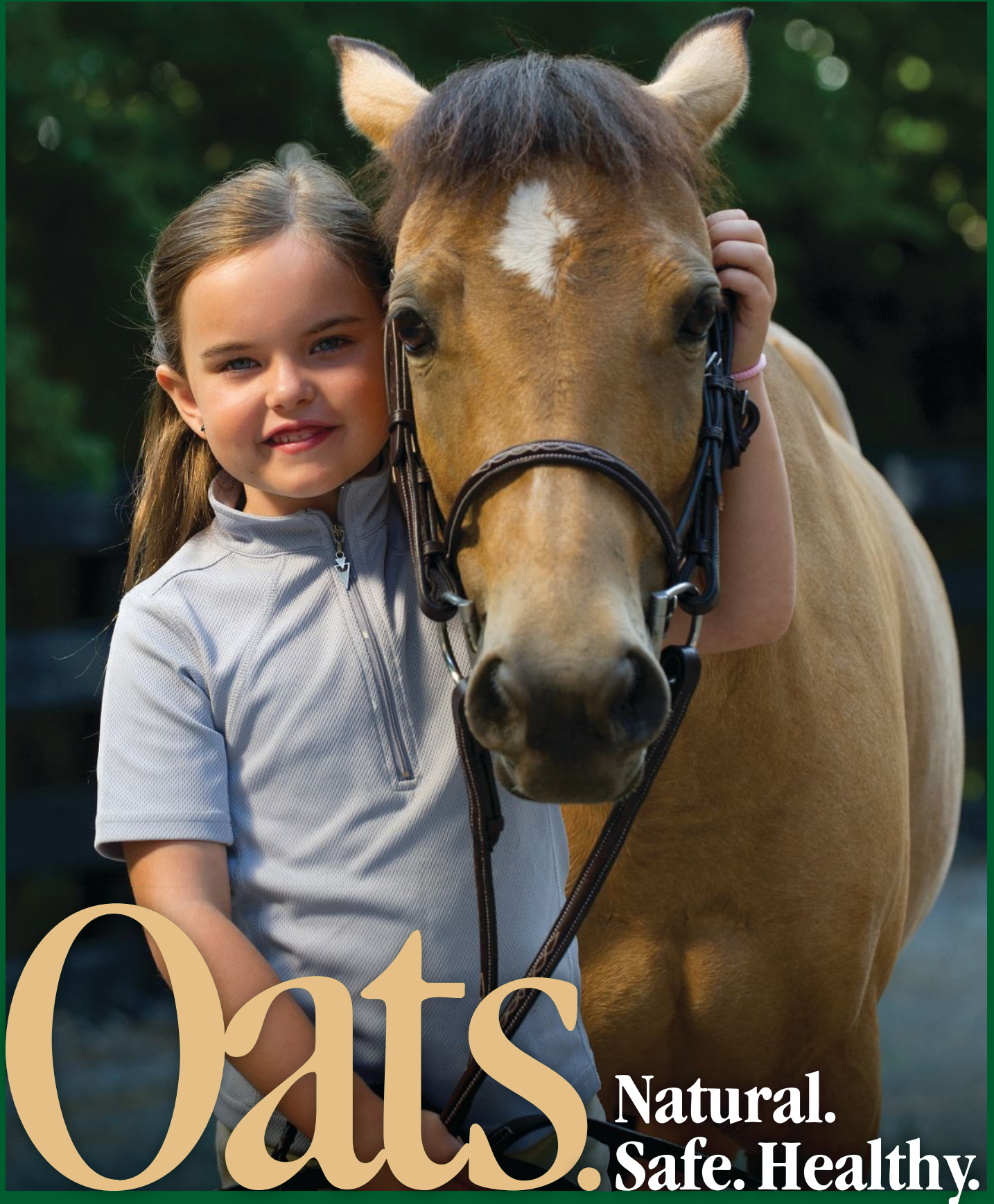
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On the cover: Starbrights Spook ('Trixie'), a 6-year-old Quarter Horse reining mare. 'She always nickers at me and has her ears up all the time,' says owner Mary Anne Suzick of Washington State. 'We call her the Barbie horse of the barn.' Photo by Mallory Beinborn

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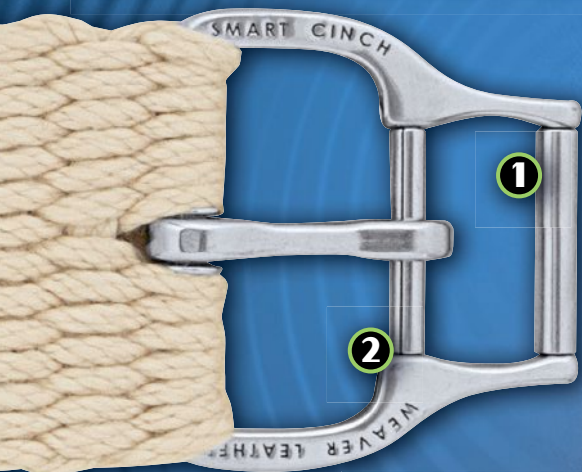
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Masterful One-Hand Guiding

Shawn Florida (above) proved his skill at one-hand riding as co-champion of last year's NRHA Futurity. Visit the Web site this month for the reining superstar's detailed lesson on how to ride subtly but effectively with reins in one hand. Find video of his winning run there, too.

Problem-Finder

To learn where your horse's training may have holes, go online for Al Dunning's problem-spotting routine—"Eye-Opening Warm-Up."

Rehab Schedule

After lay-up for a tendon or ligament injury, your horse needs careful rehabilitation. Find a 32-week schedule online in "Soft Tissue Troubles."

Flies: Get Ready

Spring begins this month, bringing fly season with it. Brush up on fly predators and other strategies in "Fly-Control Battle Plan."

Nutrients 101

"Horse Health: Vitamins and Minerals," helps you brush up on basic nutrient needs—smart reading, especially if you use supplements.

Join the Herd!

We love hearing from you! Send all high-resolution images for *Conformation Clinic*; *Problem Solvers* questions; and any feedback, ideas, photos, and letters to HorseandRider@aimmedia.com. Or mail correspondence to 2520 55th St., #210, Boulder, CO 80301.

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Bisphosphonates affect plasma concentrations of some minerals and electrolytes such as calcium, magnesium and potassium, immediately post-treatment, with effects lasting up to several hours. Caution should be used when administering bisphosphonates to horses with conditions affecting mineral or electrolyte homeostasis (e.g. hyperkalemic periodic paralysis, hypocalcemia, etc.).

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Increased bone fragility has been observed in animals treated with bisphosphonates at high doses or for long periods of time. Bisphosphonates inhibit bone resorption and decrease bone turnover which may lead to an inability to repair micro damage within the bone. In humans, atypical femur fractures have been reported in patients on long term bisphosphonate therapy; however, a causal relationship has not been established.

ADVERSE REACTIONS: The most common adverse reactions reported in the field study were clinical signs of discomfort or nervousness, colic and/or pawing. Other signs reported were lip licking, yawning, head shaking, injection site swelling, and hives/pruritus.

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(clodronate injection)

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From the Editor

By Jennifer Paulson

Opportunity for Change



I'VE NEVER KNOWN THE HORSE WORLD WITHOUT the American Quarter Horse Association in Amarillo, Texas. The organization celebrates its 75th anniversary this year, so I'm guessing many of our readers have known the registry and membership group for the entirety of their horse lives, too.

Because of its omnipresence, we tend to take AQHA for granted. It's faced challenging times recently. And one thing I've learned is that as AQHA goes, so goes the rest of the industry.

My First Membership

A very close family friend bought my first youth membership, back when the association's youth branch was still called the American Junior Quarter Horse Association. I also received a subscription to the *Quarter Horse Journal*. This might've been the best birthday gift I'd ever received up to that point. It was a few years before I'd try my hand at official AQHA competition, but I pored over my *Journals*, studying training articles and getting an early industry education.

Then, and still, AQHA meant something to me, just as I'm sure it does to many of you. It stood as a pillar of success. Something to aspire to be part of. A voice of authority and excellence.

A Changing Landscape

That first-time membership came 20-plus years ago, and the horse industry has certainly evolved in all aspects since then—sometimes for the better; sometimes to its detriment.

AQHA has progressed, serving as a leader in the industry. AQHA devised the first widespread program to log trail-riding hours, developed youth-outreach initiatives, and offered ways for those new to the horse world to get involved. All these moves were positives for the industry at large, not just for the Quarter Horse breed.

Now, don't get me wrong: AQHA has taken knocks, too. Disagreement over horses' ways of going, judging inconsistencies, accusations of abuse, and claims of elitism have given the folks in Amarillo a tough row to hoe. But they're up to the challenge. An organization doesn't survive 75 years without a sense of commitment to its cause.

An Evolving Future

March 6–9, the AQHA staff, directors, and members will gather in Fort Worth for the annual convention. They'll have the usual events: Hall of Fame inductions, a year-end awards ceremony, and 75th-anniversary recognition. But, more importantly, the venue also plays host to pivotal committee discussions regarding welfare and abuse, the judging system, and association rules.

I have a feeling that big things could come out of this year's convention. The staff, elected leaders, and members of AQHA have high expectations for their 75-year-old organization. We—owners and lovers of *all* breeds of horses—hold them to a very high standard. It's something we all have a duty to watch and be part of however we can. If a major change happens for the Quarter Horse world, it's sure to affect the entire industry in some way. □

You can reach Jennifer Paulson at jpaulson@aimmedia.com.

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Ears...Up?



WHILE WAITING IN A LO-O-O-ONG LINE AT A big-city coffee bar recently, I couldn't help but people-watch. As always in this horse life, my observations passed subliminally through an equine filter.

So as I watched the guy in front of me interact with the people around him, a random thought jogged through my brain: If he were a horse, he'd likely be an "ears-up" one—engaged, attentive, eager to please.

To me, the way a horse uses his ears says a lot about his mind. And that led me to start playing a mental game:

What kind of equine ear-attitude would other coffee customers have?

Starched Ears

There was a group of women ahead of me, patiently trying to corral high-energy kids as they relaxed and enjoyed each other's company. They reminded me of mares in a field, ears flicking lazily back and forth, tuned to their rambunctious youngsters as they socialized over a good patch of grass, tails slowly swishing with contentment.

A middle-aged woman behind them stood in line alone. Her body language was tense: She looked tired, stressed, and a wee bit annoyed. I envisioned her ears tilted back in subtle warning, as if she might kick at the first person who moved too close to her.

A group of young "studs" stood just in front of me, oblivious to everyone around them as they tried to one-up each other. I pictured them as rowdy colts in a field, ears alternately up, then back, as they chased, played, and taunted each other.

Just then a pretty "filly" walked by: Their playful banter slid to a stop. All eyes followed her. Talk about starched ears! I could barely suppress a laugh.

An elderly couple sat at a table near the line, the man and woman slowly sipping coffee, lost in separate thought, oblivious to the buzz around them. I pictured their ears relaxed, out to the side, in "neutral"—hearing, but not really processing the noise. In my mind, they were the aged mare and stallion at the water trough, lips touching the liquid as they have thousands of times before. Physically in the present; mentally someplace else.

Resistant

As the line moseyed forward, my eyes fell on a guy in his late teens behind the counter. He was refilling supplies, cleaning as he went. His sour expression and reluctant movement telegraphed that he wanted to be anywhere but here.

If he were a horse, his ears, I decided, would be permanently pointed back; his nostrils would be wrinkled in annoyance. I've seen and ridden horses like that: resistant.

I wondered if he'd been born that way (as some horses are) or was *made* that way by a person, persons, or life experience. I hoped, for his sake, that he'd someday find a job he wanted to do. (That's a wish I have for all horses, too.)

Before I knew it, it was my turn to order. The young gal taking my order was an ears-up sort. My impromptu game made me wonder what kind of ear-attitude I projected to her. I hoped it was an ears-up one, too.

What kind of ear-attitude do you think you have? I'm all ears. You know where to find me! □

You can reach *H&R* Contributing Editor Sue M. Copeland at thishorselife@aol.com.

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LETTER OF THE MONTH

New Breed; New Love

I read about editor Jennifer Paulson riding a Mangalarga Marchador in the January issue of *Horse&Rider* (*From the Editor, "A Breed New to Me"*), and I'm so glad that she got to experience a new breed! I too come from a family accustomed to Quarter Horses, and I had a similar experience.

I first encountered the National Show Horse breed (half-Arabian, half-Saddlebred, five-gaited horse; nhsregistry.org) as a sophomore in high school when I volunteered at a barn for an FFA project. One horse in particular stood out to me because of his massive size and beauty—he was a 17-hand pinto gelding named Dallas, and had quite the attitude. The first time I rode Dallas, I thought, "Wow, this is high!" I was amazed at how smooth his gait was. I was truly mesmerized—he wasn't like any Quarter Horse, that's for sure!

After that ride, Dallas and I were basically best buds. Everybody has a horse that just clicks with them, and Dallas was that horse for me. I've been riding Dallas for almost 2 years now, and I couldn't ask for a better friend. We have our rough days, but I'm so happy that I got to meet this amazing horse! If you ever have the chance, check out the NSH breed!

DANIELLE STANDAGE, Arizona

E-mail your letters to HorseandRider@aimmedia.com. Or, send them to *Horse&Rider*, 2520 55th St., #210, Boulder, CO 80301. To be considered for publication, your submission must include your full name and your state. Published letters are subject to editing for brevity, clarity, and accuracy.

More on Marchadors

We lived in Brazil for 3 years, and while we were there I learned about the Mangalarga Marchador. While I was in language school near Sao Paulo, our group took a little walking tour in a nearby park. As we strolled down the path, we came to a stable with a small ring beside it. A man stood with a beautiful bay stallion, and when he saw me ogling his horse, he asked me if I'd like to try him out.

I most definitely wasn't dressed for riding, but I wasn't about to miss the chance! In a flash, I scrambled through the fence, onto the back of that animal, and took a spin around the ring. That was not my first experience with a gaited horse, but this one had one fantastic gait! I had additional opportunities in Brazil to ride a Marchador/Campolino-cross named Ruby.

VAN EDWARDS, Wyoming

Barn-Blind

The January 2015 *This Horse Life* ("A Blind Eye") turned a small copyediting error into a big lesson and sound advice.

As a novice horseman years ago, I witnessed a Western pleasure class at

a local show and wondered why anyone would want to ride a horse like that. It didn't look right for the horse or fun for the rider. All your points are well taken. Keep up your efforts for the well being of the horse.

PAULA GRIGGS LENZ, Nevada

Wallet Relief

Kudos to editor-at-large Juli Thorson for "Save \$500 on Horse Care" (January 2015). At a time when budgets are stretched thin, these are some simple and easy applications we all can do. The hardest part is breaking old/bad habits.

GRACE JACKSON BROWN, California

Readers Respond

Does your horse like to roll in the snow? It's near the end of snow season—and the snowiest month of the year for many places. Here's what our Facebook fans had to say about horses making snow angels.



Jodilyn Ord-Lacey Mine's more a fan of mud!

Sandy Austin Allen I have a few who just love rolling no matter the ground, be it snow, dry dirt, sand, or mud!

Jessie Maske The Thoroughbred loves it; the Arabian hates it.

Cora Lee Adams Belliveau Mine rolled in a snow drift last year and got stuck! Major panic on my part, but it was funny and he did eventually get up.

Brandy Lynn My filly hasn't seen snow yet. But knowing her squirrely Arabian self, she'd spook herself into a heart attack!

Get It Right!

I was delighted to read that editor Jennifer Paulson enjoyed riding one of "our" horses—a Mangalarga Marchador (*Editor's Letter*, January 2015). The Marchador is very important to us Brazilians, and we're very proud of them.

You mixed up the gaits' names and descriptions, but don't worry, that's normal. They're hard to learn, being in a foreign language and totally unfamiliar to you. The *Marcha batida* has more time spent in diagonal support, while the *Marcha picada* has more time spent in lateral support, although both are a mix of lateral and diagonal, with moments of triple support.

LAURA PATTERSON, DVM, Brazil

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Is Variable Salt Intake Normal?

A horse owner wonders why some horses gobble their salt blocks while others hardly touch theirs.

Q I once had an older Tennessee Walking Horse gelding that would literally eat his salt block, scraping at it with his teeth. I've also known horses that completely ignore their salt blocks. Why the difference, and is either behavior unhealthy? Did my gelding's age or breed have anything to do with it?

KIM ANDREWS, Texas

A There are no age, gender, or breed predilections that influence the voluntary salt intake of an individual horse. Salt helps maintain electrolyte and water balance in horses as it does in all animals, and certain

individuals may consume more or less salt than others based on need and preferences.

The best approach is to provide a salt block and allow voluntary intake, while limiting the amount of salt for horses that gobble it. Plain salt blocks are white, and made of the same type of salt as we keep on our tables. The red blocks, known as mineral blocks, include other ingredients—such as magnesium, cobalt, potassium, and vitamins—in addition to salt.

Mineral blocks often contain molasses and other sweeteners, too; for this reason, some horses enjoy eating them or may even become addicted to

eating them. Some horses enjoy salt more than others and will spend more time licking a block; others will lick at either block, white or red, due simply to boredom.

Horses that consume salt or mineral blocks quickly—say, within days to a week—should have their intake limited. A good solution in those cases is to put a small block in with the horse at monthly intervals.

Horses consuming a balanced diet (including pasture and/or good quality hay, with or without a concentrate) won't typically need further salt supplementation beyond the block. There's also no concern regarding horses with



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—Saylorsburg, PA

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When More Salt May Be Needed

Given the prolonged nature of their energy expenditures, endurance horses provide a good example of when you may need to consider proactive salt/electrolyte supplementation. These horses often go for 50 to 100 miles at a time, leading to marked electrolyte imbalances from prolonged sweating and loss of water.

Endurance competitors typically administer salt to their horses through balanced electrolytes in water or feed—well beyond the voluntary salt consumption through a salt block. The horses are closely monitored by veterinarians during competition for aberrations in fluid and electrolyte balance.

no interest in the salt block. We don't advise top-dressing a horse's concentrate ration with salt as this may affect palatability and perhaps result in a refusal to eat the grain.

Do be aware that temperature can affect a horse's need or desire for salt. A horse performing in 100-degree heat especially needs free-choice access to

salt and, of course, water. Salt will encourage water consumption, a dynamic that can be of critical importance in hot, dry climates.

A horse's activity level can also play a role in salt intake, and animals working as hard and long as endurance horses, for example, may need salt/electrolyte supplementation (see box).

But for other riding horses—even performance horses—providing a salt block for voluntary consumption is typically adequate.

ALISON LaCARRUBBA, DVM, DABVP
Assistant Teaching Professor
Equine Ambulatory
and Internal Medicine
College of Veterinary Medicine
University of Missouri

HorseandRider.com

For a review of your horse's other basic-nutrient needs, read "Horse Health: Vitamins and Minerals" at HorseandRider.com.

Send horse health and behavior questions to jfmeyer@aimmedia.com. Include horse's age, breed, gender.

Love Story

She took a deep breath as they walked into the arena. She could feel his muscles gather under her leg as she asked him to lope. The music for her first freestyle reining program filled the air. Her heart pounded as they galloped under the spotlight. The crowd cheered as he spun, first one way and then the other. He gathered speed and slid to a halt in perfect harmony with the end of her favorite country song. She didn't hear the crowd whistle and hoot as she buried her face in his long mane, because the love she felt for him blocked it all out.



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YourHorse YourLife

WE'D LOVE TO OWN

Roy

Details: 2004 grade Quarab gelding.

Owned and shown by: Madison Lysaker of Holmen, Wisconsin.

Class clown: He's cute with a personality to boot. Lysaker, 18, says she has more funny stories about her gelding than she has time to share them.

"When he's in the pasture he likes to play with my aunt's calves," Lysaker explains. "He'll touch noses with one and then run down the fence line, bucking and playing." She divulges that Roy also has a sweet tooth: "He loves licorice! And, he'll steal my water bottle off the fence so he can drink my lemonade."

Hopeful horsewoman: "My aunt has always had horses, so I wanted one," Lysaker shares. "So, she helped me find Roy. He's my first horse." Lysaker describes her connection with Roy as "perfect," but it wasn't always that way. "He was so naughty at my first lesson!" she explains. "It took a year of riding before we clicked."

Real-life carousel: "Every spring, my school's FFA chapter brings kids out to the farm to ride and brush the horses," Lysaker says. "Roy loves it. He likes being brushed, fed treats, and toting them around. He gets along with kids really well."

Dynamic duo: The pair competes in a variety of disciplines. "We did 4-H," Lysaker recalls. "His favorite event was trail. He likes the challenge of obstacles and new events. He loves drill team most, though, because he can show off. He trusts me, so we try new things often. I'm going to take him to college with me so I can try out for the school's rodeo or equestrian team."

...Alexis Bennett



Shawn Florida and Shine N Spook display textbook form winning the 2014 NRHA Futurity co-championship.

Reiner's Run: Rave Reviews

Shawn Florida and Shine N Spook, co-champions at last December's National Reining Horse Association Futurity in Oklahoma City, wowed our Facebook fans when we put the pair's finals video up on *H&R*'s page. "Best looking reining pattern I've seen posted in a while—natural head carriage, relaxed spins, smooth changes," observed one commenter. "Now *that* is how a reining horse should perform," quipped another.

We couldn't agree more. Florida, who hails from Springfield, Ohio, rode the stallion for owner Clark Reining Horses, LLC of Catlettsburg, Kentucky. (To read Florida's *Private Lesson* on developing good hands, or to see the video if you missed it, go to HorseandRider.com this month.)

EYE-POPPING INCREASE

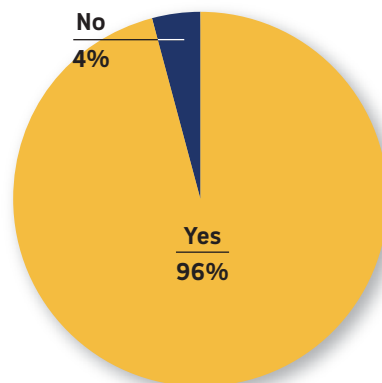
350%

Growth in entries at the second annual Western Dressage World Championship show, held last November in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Riders from 21 states and abroad competed on horses representing more than 20 breeds and types (westerndressageassociation.org).

MOVE THAT HIP, SHOULDER

'Whenever a new rider joins my barn, I ask to see him or her isolate and move a horse's shoulder, then isolate and move the hip. If the student can do this, we move on to other things. These skills are that important.'

...Trainer Mike Boyle, in "Basic Body Control of Your Horse" (available online at HorseandRider.com)



GALLOP POLL

Rescued a Horse?

We asked if you've ever rescued a neglected horse or adopted one that had been rescued. Above is a breakdown of the responses we received. (To participate in future polls, "like" us at our Facebook page.)



Historic Breeders

If you're in Amarillo, Texas, between now and the end of July, check out the new exhibit at the American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame & Museum. "Breeding a Legacy: 75 Years of American Quarter Horses" features a never-before-seen collection of memorabilia, stories, and images showcasing 16 breeders who've registered a Quarter Horse foal every year for the past three-quarters of a century.

Included are such influential breeders as the Burnett ranches, Haythorn Land and Cattle Co., the King Ranch, WT Waggoner Estate, Bonham ranch, Pitchfork Land and Cattle, and Benny Binion. The exhibit celebrates the AQHA's 75th anniversary this year (aqha.com/museum).

Try It Gratis

Free sample: Foxden Equine is offering a free trial of its Quiescence, a pelleted magnesium and chromium formula designed to promote calm behavior. It also supports normal glucose metabolism and increased peripheral circulation to reduce your horse's tendency to founder.

To get yours: Go to foxdenequine.com/quiescence, or call (540) 337-5450.



Q: I'm considering using fly predators this year. Do they really work?

A: This fly-control method, which uses no chemicals and is environment-friendly, works well if you follow instructions. It's best if you start the program early in spring, then release additional fly predators every three to four weeks. The tiny, low-flying wasps (which don't bite you, your horses, or your pets) use fly cocoons as a host, killing the flies before they hatch. (For more information on fly predators and other strategies, see "Fly-Control Battle Plan" at HorseandRider.com.)

HEALTH ALERT

80,000

Number of eggs a single female pinworm can deposit on your horse's rectum. Ask your veterinarian about the recent re-emergence of this pesky internal parasite due to the development of resistance to available deworming medications. (*Equine Veterinary Education*, November 2014)

VETSPEAK

'Foal-Heat Diarrhea'

Mild, self-limiting diarrhea that often occurs in foals. Though typically timed with the dam's foal heat, it's actually unrelated except by coincidence.

Source: The Comprehensive Guide to Equine Veterinary Medicine, by Barb Crabbe, DVM



Though your horse is no longer limping, don't hurry his rehab schedule.

Rest Is Best After Injury

When your horse suffers a soft-tissue injury, the tendon or ligament involved heals slowly and may remain weakened for some time after, making it vulnerable to re-injury. That's why extended rest and careful rehabilitation are at least as important as any therapeutic measures. Rehab, which typically begins with hand-walking, may take up to six or seven months, even though your horse may not experience any pain after three to eight weeks. (For a sample 32-week rehab schedule, see "Soft Tissue Trouble" at HorseandRider.com.)

Prebiotic Helps Oldsters

The lowdown: Purina now offers feeds formulated to address the needs of horses living ever-longer lives—and encountering new health issues. The company's ActivAge prebiotic is designed to strengthen your older horse's immune function, boost his body's response to vaccination, and help protect him from aging-related inflammation.

Check the research: Go to senioractivage.com.



The wooden handle of this shedding brush comfortably fits in your hand, making long grooming sessions easier on you.



Shedding Season

Like it or not, shedding season is upon us (not to mention muddy-coat season). If you're looking for a new shedding tool, check out the SleekeZ. The wooden-handled brush contains small metal teeth that are effective at removing shedding hair and mud, yet are still gentle on your horse's skin.

SleekeZ brushes come in a variety of sizes, from small (\$12.95; for your shedding dog) to large (\$19.95; ideal for your horse), and you can choose a combo pack for a reduced total price. The brushes offer a 100-percent, money-back guarantee.

More info: (855) SLEEKEZ; try.sleekez.com/hd1.

Editor-Tested Products

We gathered up products that can make barn life easier and tested them to see if they lived up to their claims. Check out which items we evaluated in, "Hey! It Works!," beginning on page 58.



NEED A GOAL? LET US HELP

We know that it's sometimes hard to figure out what to work on every time you head to the barn. That's why each month we put a new to-do list on our Web site (HorseandRider.com). Each list includes items like training tips, health topics, horsekeeping solutions, ways to improve your riding, and other advice. Be sure to check back often, especially if you're in a rut with your horse and are looking for something new to try.

Your
TO-DO
List

YOUR SOLUTIONS

Rather than use garbage cans to store feed, I love the stackable bins with front-open lids. You can stack them to save space, which is essential when you feed a variety of concentrates. They're a practical, space-saving, inexpensive way to stay organized!



—Jody Webb, Oregon

Send your Solutions, along with your name and home state, to HorseandRider@aimmedia.com.

Shipping a Saddle

Sell your saddle? Here are a few tips for safely shipping it to its new owner. Throughout this process, take photos of the saddle outside the box, wrapped, and inside the box in case any damage occurs during transit.

Price the freight.	Get a box.	Wrap it up.	Put it in the box.	Seal the box.
Be sure that all parties are aware of the cost of shipping and who's covering it. This can sometimes be a deal-breaker.	Call tack shops or your local moving company for a large box. Note that it might not be free, but a solid box is worth the price.	With the saddle lying on its seat and the fenders folded in, wrap it in plastic to keep it clean and dry during transit.	Place padding material in the bottom of the box, and rest the saddle on its seat or horn-down inside the box; add more padding.	Use high-quality packing tape to tightly seal the box and attach the mailing label, and you're ready to ship.

Warm Up the Right Way

Don't be blasé about warm-ups. A proper pre-ride session avoids injury and sets your horse up to perform.

A proper warm-up is one of the best things you can do to maximize the success of your ride and protect your horse from injury. When you ease him into exercise through a phased-in warm-up, you allow time for his breathing and heart rate to increase gradually. As the blood flow to muscles steps up, the muscle fibers are warmed and strengthened.

The gradual increase also helps to avoid a build-up of lactic acid and other metabolic wastes in his tissues, which helps your horse avoid early fatigue and other issues. Phased-in work enables joints to flex and tendons to stretch *gently*, without injury, as they prepare for more vigorous exercise.

With these points in mind, here's what to consider as you plan a warm-up sequence.

Be smart, go easy. Start slowly. If your horse has been stalled rather than turned out, be extra careful in this regard, and allow extra warm-up time. Also, if your horse is naturally fractious or ready to "blast off" from pent-up energy, don't just turn him into a pen or put him on a long line and let him go crazy—that just invites injury (see box). As you plan your horse's warm-up, think "loosen, warm, supple"—in that order.

Walk to loosen. Easy walking is the part of a warm-up many experts stress the most. Put your horse on a draped rein and in as relaxed a frame as possible to loosen him up. Use your whole arena, or work in extra-large circles to keep stress on joints and tendons/ligaments low. Allow a good 5 to 10 minutes at this easy walk, more if your horse is older and/or especially stiff. (Like aging human athletes, older horses need extra time to get the blood flowing and the muscles/tendons ready to work.)

Trot, lope to warm. After that critical walking period, ease into a trot to get your horse's blood flowing and his heart rate up.

Longeing, Turnout Precautions

If longeing or turnout is part of your warm-up routine, take extra care to avoid injury. Apply leg protection, as playing in turnout or traveling on a longeing circle increases your horse's risk of interfering (contact between his front and hind legs). Hand-walk him for a few moments first if you fear he's going to be too exuberant when you turn him loose. Then, on the long line, have him walk for several minutes first before asking for a trot or lope, and keep the circles large. If you've turned him out, don't urge him to run straightaway.



Experts agree: Plenty of easy, relaxed walking is the best start for a warm-up. Whatever else you do, don't skimp on this part.

This begins the actual warming up of your horse's muscular-skeletal system. Continue to use your whole arena and large circles as you work for a few minutes at a trot, then advance to a forward-moving lope.

Bend to supple. When you can feel your horse settling in and warming to his work at the trot and lope, begin some bending to further stretch and supple his muscles. Make your circles smaller, and add serpentine, figure-8s, or other exercises to the mix. Be sure to work equally in both directions, so you supple both sides equally. After a few minutes of bending, your horse should be ready, mind and body, to focus on whatever you want to work on in earnest.

Short on time? Just warm up. On days when you don't have time for a 20- to 30-minute warm-up *and* a practice session, don't short the warm-up. Instead, use it as your saddle time for that day. You'll keep your horse tuned up and avoid the risk of injury—so you can ride again tomorrow. □

HorseandRider.com

Visit the Web site to review "Eye-Opening Warm-Up," trainer Al Dunning's problem-spotting warm-up routine.

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Old to New

The Horse Coin Cuff from the Old Money Corp features the Irish half-crown coin attached to a soft leather band. The coin has high silver content, which gives it its luster, and features an Irish hunter horse. A heavy-duty snap secures the cuff in place so you can wear it to the barn as well as with your favorite to-town outfit.

More info: \$65; (864) 918-1344; oldmoneycorp.com.

Bag O' Bling

Keep all of your attire together and in one place so you can focus more energy on your horse's preparation instead of your own. Here are our handy packing tips.

- If you have a specific piece in mind for a show, make sure it's cleaned, pressed, and fitted well in advance.
- Collect and hang all necessary components of the outfit together including pants; belt; boots; and, where applicable, undershirt, jacket, and/or vest.
- Place the jewelry that you'll wear with the outfit in a plastic bag, and attach that to your main piece's hanger. Don't forget to label individual bags with which outfit it belongs with and your name in case it gets mixed up in travel.
- Label the outside of your garment bag for the class you plan to wear the outfit for (e.g., horsemanship finals). This'll save you from digging for the right outfit when it's time to change.



Modern Mohair

Your favorite traditional-tack item just got better with these custom mohair cinches from Badger Creek Arts. Each cinch is woven from 100-percent mohair fibers and hand-dyed to create a one-of-a-kind, wearable piece of art for your horse. Choose from a variety of styles online, or work with the artist to create your very own design.

More info: \$285; (916) 996-4437; badgercreekarts.com.

Talk of the Tack Room

What it is:

Hair-on custom saddle stand from Cowhide Customs.

Why we like it:

You can clean up and add a little flair to your space at the same time, plus it'll keep your saddle off the ground (a long-term maintenance helper).

Why buy: Use it to dress up and organize your tack room or as an attractive mount to display your trophy saddle in your home.

More info: \$119; cowhidecustoms.com.



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Boker

Style: 01C1092P.

More info: \$43.95; bokerusa.com.



Swiss Army

Style: Giraffe.

More info: \$24; swissarmy.com.



The Mad Cow Company

Style: Chief knife.

More info: \$90; shopmadcownow.com.

Driving the Cow

Use this exercise to keep your horse alert and focused when boxing a cow.

By **Al Dunning**, With **Jennifer Paulson**
Photos by **Jennifer Paulson**



Boxing a cow (working him at the short end of the arena) is all about your horse's focus, his ability to read a cow, and his readiness to move with that cow in a split second. When your horse is stopped parallel with the cow, your horse must maintain that focus. However, sometimes your horse might lose his intensity, forget about the cow, and stand dull and flat-footed. Your horse isn't ready, which puts him at a severe disadvantage when the cow makes a move. That's when this exercise comes in handy. I call it "driving the cow."

Here, I'll show you the steps for this exercise to try at home. It should help your horse regain his focus and be more responsive to do his job. In these photos, I'm using a shanked bit with split reins, alternating between one- and two-handed riding. Use whatever bit setup your horse is most comfortable in, and use two hands on the reins whenever you feel your horse needs the extra support. →

Practice Pen

PRIVATE LESSON



1 My horse is tracking with the cow down the fence. As the cow prepares to stop, so does my horse. They'll stop parallel to each other and the fence. Ideally, my horse should make a solid stop, but be ready to initiate the cow's next move.

2 I've stopped with the cow. This is when my horse could lose intensity and focus, demonstrated by standing flat-footed rather than ready to move, and giving a dull expression. A horse with this attitude is sure to lose that cow as soon as it turns to run in the opposite direction. When I notice a lack of attention, I begin my "driving the cow" drill.

3 After coming to a complete stop, I back my horse a few steps to get him on his hind end, rather than standing flat-footed. When he's flat-footed, he's at a severe disadvantage; he's not coiled up and ready to move with that cow. When my horse is on his hindquarters, he's more able to spring to action with the cow.

4 I stop backing once my horse's nose is in line with the cow's hip. This helps my horse connect to the cow and think about initiating the cow's movement. I want my horse to read the cow—that is, initiate a cow's movement and go with it or react to the cow's movement.

5 With my horse's nose at the cow's hip, I cue for a turn toward the cow. I use my inside rein to begin the turn and my outside leg to straighten out my horse once I've completed a 180-degree turn. This stop-back-turn sequence tells my horse to *stop, hunt the cow, pick up your front end, be athletic, and sweep across the cow smoothly*. If my horse seems too dull or flat-footed, I'll sweep through a 180-degree turn to the left and the right, to get my horse's attention and move his feet. I sometimes sweep back and forth a few times.

6 When my horse began his turn, he connected with the cow and made



the cow turn 180 degrees, too. You can see that my horse has his weight on his hind end, pivoting over his hindquarters like they're on an axis. It's important that my horse gives to the pull of my inside rein, bends readily, and yields to my leg pressure to straighten out for this exercise to be effective.

7We're headed back down the fence with the cow. When my horse stops again, he should be ready to move with the cow—with his weight on his hindquarters, his face ready to yield to my rein cues, and his body responsive to my leg cues. By repeating this drill, my horse becomes more attached to

the cow and better uses his hind end to drive the cow.

8Here's what I'm talking about, in terms of my horse being coiled up and ready to work the cow. His weight is on his hindquarters, his front legs are making a snappy turn across the cow, and his expression shows that he's reading that cow. All of this comes together for a horse that's *ready* to work, attentive, and dynamic to the cow's movement. □

Al Dunning, Scottsdale, Arizona, has produced world champion horses and riders in multiple disciplines. He's been a professional



trainer for more than 40 years, and his expertise has led him to produce books, DVDs, and his own online mentoring program, Team AD International (teamadinternational.com).

**The
Creatures
Your Horse
Hates Most**

Practice Pen

BOB AVILA'S WINNING INSIGHTS

Ode to Icing

Learn how taking the time to ice your horse's legs can help keep him sound—and save you vet bills!

By **Bob Avila**, With **Sue M. Copeland**
Photos by **Marc Laxineta, DVM**

“The harder you work your horses, the harder you should take care of them.”

Those words, spoken to me decades ago by a wise horseman, ring true today. In fact, they're like a mantra to me.

One way I've always taken care of my horses is to ice their legs after hard work. It's a management concept that hasn't changed in my lifetime: I remember my father icing horses' legs when I was a little kid. That's because ice therapy is inexpensive and effective. Ice, applied after exercise, can reduce swelling and pain by decreasing the blood flow and metabolic processes that come from an inflammatory response produced by exercise or an injury. It also seems to provide therapeutic relief, which is why many elite human athletes seek out ice baths after a tough workout.

Icing isn't just for elite athletes, be they horse or human. “Weekend warriors,” those horses that stand around all week, then are worked hard on the trail or rail on the weekend, are prime candidates for ice therapy. But too often, trainers and riders skip this important step. That's something I don't understand: Ice isn't expensive; the only cost is time.

The ABCs of Icing

In my barn, you'll see us icing horses every day. Not every horse gets iced every day. I generally ice one after a hard workout and after a hard show day. Here



Applying ice after exercise is an inexpensive and effective way to help reduce any inflammation that can be produced by exercise.

are some tips for how to do it. (Note: These tips are for routine, post-workout icing only. If your horse has suffered an injury that requires icing, consult with your veterinarian for guidelines.)

- We generally wet down a horse's legs before we ice them, to prevent “ice burn.”
- You're usually safe putting cubed ice directly on your horse's wet skin. (I'll give you some tips for doing so,



Commercial boots with built-in or removable gel packs are a convenient way to ice your horse's legs. Keep the boots or gel packs in the freezer, then apply them to your horse's legs after a show or workout. If we're showing close to home, we'll put such boots on our horses' legs for the trailer ride home. Multi-tasking!

plus some other options.) But if you're using a rigid or flexible ice pack, put a cotton cloth or towel between it and his skin.

- We ice both front and/or hind legs for about 20 minutes to half an hour at a time. (You *can* over-do it. Check with your vet before icing for any longer.)

- One of the most cost-effective ways to ice legs is by cutting a pants leg off a pair of old jeans or slacks to act as an "ice sleeve." Put your horse's leg through it. Use a wrap (or duct tape) to



The Game Ready Equine system, which we employ at my barn, combines dry cold with compression on a horse's legs. It's a great system for post-workout therapy, as well as for acute or chronic leg problems. Due to its four-figure cost, it's generally used by pros and veterinarians. Even without this tool, your diligent use of plain, old ice and time will pay off for your horse.

seal the pants leg around his pastern, and then fill the pants leg with ice.

- Bags of frozen peas or corn also make good ice packs. Simply put a layer of cotton cloth between the bag and your horse's leg, and hold the pack in place with a polo wrap.

- If you like, you can invest in commercial icing products. Ice boots are available that contain pockets into which you can pour water and freeze. Such boots allow you to target specific areas on your horse's legs with ice therapy and are generally available for under \$100 per pair.

- Commercial boots that use built-in gel cells, or removable ones, that stay cold are super-convenient. You store the boots or gel cells in a plastic bag in the freezer, and then simply

apply them to your horse's legs as you would a typical boot. No melting ice! Such boots are generally under \$100 per pair. *Tip:* If you're showing within about a half-hour or so from home, apply gel-cell boots to your horses' legs for the trailer ride home. And *voila*—they're iced!

- If you get caught somewhere with no access to ice or commercial icing products, plain old cold water can help cool down legs. Simply use a hose to apply cold, running water to your horse's lower legs for 15 to 20 minutes.

The final word: Icing your horse's legs doesn't have to be complicated. In fact, I hope the tips I've given you here make you realize how simple (and inexpensive) it can be. Do the right thing by his legs. It'll pay off in the long run. □

HorseandRider.com

Visit HorseandRider.com this month to learn more about different kinds of ice boots, as well as tips for using and maintaining them.

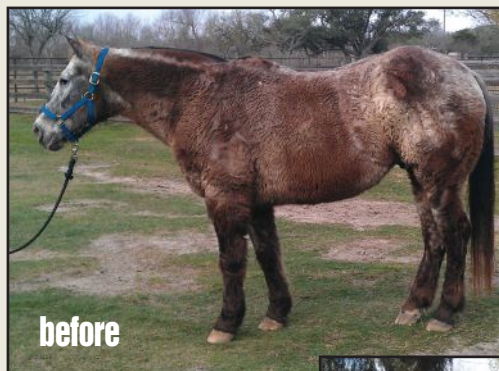


A multiple AQHA world champion, Avila has also won three NRCHA Snaffle Bit Futurities, the NRHA Futurity, and two World's Greatest Horseman titles. He received the AQHA Professional Horseman of the Year honor. His Avila Training Stables, Inc., is in Temecula, California. Learn more at bobavila.net.



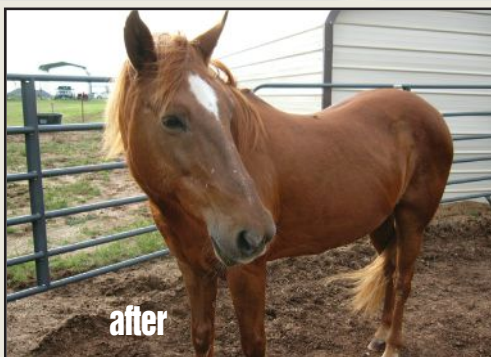
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Practice Pen

THE CONFIDENT RIDER

Sideways Control

These three exercises will boost your ability to move both ends of your horse's body laterally for better overall control.

By **Sandy Collier**,
With **J. Forsberg Meyer**

Control over a horse's body movements is a confidence builder for any rider. Here, you'll learn to boost your horse's responsiveness to your go-sideways cues, so that all lateral moves become easier. I'll give you three techniques: one at the hitching rack; one in hand; and one mounted, at a gate. Each builds on the others. The first two focus on moving your horse's hind end; the third adds front-end movement as well. Master them all, and you'll be well on your way to controlling your horse's sideways movements.

At the hitching rack. Practice this one at grooming time. (If there's any chance your horse will pull back, untie him first.) Stand at your horse's side and use a sweat scraper or hoof pick to create pressure right where your heel presses on his ribs when you're mounted. Use the least amount of pressure possible, building if necessary; don't start with a jab.

The instant he takes one sideways step with a hind foot, stop and praise him, then ask for another step. You can draw his head toward you slightly if need be to help encourage his hind-quarters over.

Now try it from the other side, repeating the lesson frequently from both sides until your horse responds willingly to mild pressure.

In hand. With your horse saddled and bridled, stand next to him, hold-



Training your horse to move sideways, away from pressure, is easiest from the ground. Press in with your thumb at about the spot where your heel would be. The learning will then transfer when you mount up.

ing the reins in one hand. With the thumb of the other hand, press in the same place as before—just behind the cinch where your leg would be. This time, rather than tipping his head, use the reins only to keep his head straight. Practice on both sides, always using the least possible pressure that's effective. →



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Fly Predators are a mix of up to three species. None of which is *Nasonia*, which historically has made up 90% of Fly Eliminators. Our three species have complimentary characteristics. Some travel farther, some dig deeper, some are far bigger. Even though *Nasonia* costs less to produce, Arbico is the only US insectory producing it for large animal fly control.

Scientific Tests Show *Nasonia* Is Ineffective For Large Animal Fly Control

When reviewing all published scientific studies using fly parasites for fly control we could find (total of 42 so far), only one listed *Nasonia* as effective for fly control (with chickens), while eight determined *Nasonia* was *ineffective* for large animals. By comparison for the species included in Fly Predators, good efficacy for all kinds of animals was shown in 25 of 27 studies for species in the genus *Spalangia* and 18 of 23 studies for species in the genus *Muscidifurax*.

Fly Eliminators Are Cheaper. Not Really!

Our ads emphasise good fly control and how to achieve it. Arbico's ads emphasize "Low Price". Arbico's single shipments do cost a little less, however, your real cost is determined by how many of them are needed over a season. Arbico's "recommended" programs almost always have more shipments than we find are needed for Fly Predators. Directly comparing schedules for hundreds of zip codes, **Fly Eliminators were 18%-29% MORE expensive** on average than Fly Predators for a season. Cheaper shipments are no bargain if your total cost is more.

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Practice Pen

(HAVE YOU TRIED?)

Opening a gate. Now mount up and move both his front and hind ends in opening a gate. Ask a friend to move the gate manually so you can have both hands on your reins to influence your horse's body.

Line your horse up parallel to the gate. Have your friend push it open a bit, toward you, as you ask your horse to step sideways with his front end, away from the gate. Do this by carrying both reins away from the gate while applying pressure using the heel nearest the gate—right at the cinch—to encourage his shoulders over.

After he takes one sideways step away from the gate with his front end (the gate coming at him helps him understand what you want), move his hind end. Simply apply pressure with your gate-side heel (in the same spot as you did with the tool or your hand) to move his hind end over a step. If he resists, bump with that heel a little farther back on his ribs until he takes the step.

Go back and forth this way, moving his front end, then his back end as your friend moves the gate a little more open, toward you, each time.

Work both sides of the gate, opening it in either direction, then reverse all the cues to teach your horse to close the gate, reinforcing the lateral lesson.

From here, you'll be well prepared to move on to other lateral exercises (such as sidepassing). And, as your control over his body increases, so will your confidence in the saddle. □



Sandy Collier, Buellton, California, is a Quarter Horse world champion trainer and the only woman to win the open division of the World

Championship Snaffle Bit Futurity. Find her popular book (*Reining Essentials*) and numerous training DVDs at sandycollier.com.

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And flies will keep coming back because sprays, traps and bait only affect

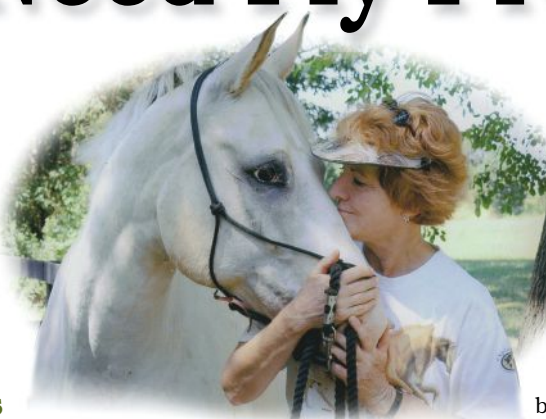
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the adult fly stage, ignoring the other 85% yet to emerge. By comparison Fly Predators stop those future flies – really fixing your fly problem. There's no down side as the Fly Predators do not bother people or animals.

Why Wait Another Year To Try Them?

You know flies will be back. Rather than wait for the inevitable, this year make a change and see how much more enjoyable a "hardly-a-fly" summer can be.

Once someone tries Fly Predators for at least three shipments, most use them for as long as they have their animals. More than a few are now in their third decade of using Fly Predators, like Julie Goodnight, Dr. Robert M. Miller and Pat Parelli. See thousands of customer comments, including those near you, on our website.



"My vet stopped by last week and she remarked it was possible to have a conversation in my barn due to the absence of flies since we use Fly Predators. In other barns she had been to that day flies were pretty bad."

—Kathy L., Cream Ridge, NJ

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Make sure you get "Real" Fly Predators. Others, selling "cheaper" bugs, ship a different species – that published scientific studies indicate are ineffective for large animals.

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Practice Pen

CONFORMATION CLINIC

Evaluate and place these 3-year-old Quarter Horse mares in your order of preference. Then see how your choices match up with our expert judge's.

John Pipkin



Pipkin is a carded judge for APHA, AQHA, NRCHA, NRHA, NSBA, and WCHA. He's officiated at more than 380 shows nationally and internationally.

Aside from judging, Pipkin is a professor at West Texas A&M University, where he's the director of the Equine Industry Program in the Department of Agricultural Sciences. He's coached horse-judging teams to over 90 champion or reserve champion titles at competitions, including intercollegiate contests held in conjunction with the AQHA World Show, All American Quarter Horse Congress, and National Reining Horse Association events.

Judge Quarter Horses in accordance with the industry standard for stock-horse breeds. These standards are balance, structural correctness, quality (breed and sex characteristics), and muscling. The first-place horse will have the highest combination of positive characteristics in those categories.

A mare's balance is evaluated in three primary ways. She must be proportionate, which begins with the angle and length of her shoulder, and influences function as well as aesthetics. The length of her shoulder should be equal to the length of her back and the length of her hip. The shoulder should have good angle, near 45 degrees, to encourage free movement and a long stride. Then, I look at the mare's neck and head and their length in relation to these components. A lean, consistent taper to her neck with a smooth blend to the shoulder is most attractive.

Her topline should be even from the top of her withers to her croup. A horse should have a deep (long) heartgirth in relation to the length of her leg. The desired angle of the hock is 130 to 160 degrees so that she can drive beneath herself.

When I look at a mare's head, I assess size, shape, and proportionality. Ideally, her head should be shorter than a gelding's or stallion's head, with the eye halfway between the ears and muzzle. A small, upright, and alert-looking ear is also preferred.

Finally, I assess muscling. Definition and refinement reflect quality of muscling best. The forearm, stifle, and gaskin show overall depth and volume most. Age and gender also dictates volume and quality of muscling. →



Practice Pen

CONFORMATION CLINIC

First: Mare C

The photo of Mare C is closer and at a more forward angle than the other two mares' photos, which doesn't do her much justice. But, she still seems to have the advantage in this group, especially in terms of balance and quality of her head. She has good length and fullness to her shoulder. Her neck ties in smoothly, but I'd prefer to see a little higher tie-in at the bottom of her neck for improved movement and performance. She could have a trimmer throatlatch, which would aid with flex-

ion. Over her topline, she's level from withers to croup. She has a full hip with good length and angulation. It complements the angle of her shoulder well. She has adequate heartgirth, with good depth-of-body-to-length-of-leg ratio. Her hock is well angled, which will allow her to drive from her hind end well. She even could have a little less angle to her hock; it'd improve overall structural correctness.

Her head is more contoured from her eyes to her muzzle, and more feminine



in comparison to the other two mares. She's well muscled, and is the heaviest through the forehead of the group, though she lacks the definition and expression that Mare B has. From a quality standpoint, she's the best of the group.

Second: Mare A

Overall, she's fairly well balanced and smooth. Both her shoulder and her hip have good angulation and are complementary and balanced. Her neck is trimmer than the first-place mare's, especially on the bottom side of her neck. It makes it appear longer and thinner overall. Similar to Mare C, though, she could tie in higher to her shoulder. A trimmer throatlatch would also improve her correctness and aid

in her ability to flex and collect. Her topline is level and of good length. She also has a strong back. Her heartgirth-to-length-of-leg ratio is good. She has more angle in her hock than I prefer to see; she's a little camped under. There also appears to be some unevenness from her knee to hock, which may cause her to be heavier on her front end. Otherwise, she's structurally correct. Her pasterns have good angulation and



appear to match the angle of her shoulders well.

She's adequately muscled and has more volume than the third-place mare.

Third: Mare B

Mare B is the least balanced of this group. She does have a trimmer neck than both of the other mares. She lacks length in her shoulder, causing excess steepness, which will cause her difficulty with self-carriage. But, she does have a better tie-in to the shoulder on the bottom side of her neck. Her withers are lower than her croup, which likely will make her a front-end-dominant mover. I'd like to see more depth

to her hip overall. It lacks length, so is flat and deficient of adequate angle to complement her shoulder. Her heartgirth could also be deeper; she's shallow in relation to the length of her leg. She's very structurally correct from front to rear, though: She has the best angulation to her hocks of all the mares in the group, and she has good angulation to her pasterns.

Her quality lacks in comparison to the



other mares in the group. She has the slightest body and lacks overall volume of muscle. Her head is plain, and coarser than I'd prefer to see on a mare.

To submit a photo of your horse to be evaluated in *Conformation Clinic*, send us a left-side profile photo of your horse (for digital photos: high-resolution, 300 dpi, in at least 3" x 5") to HorseandRider@aimmedia.com with your contact info and your horse's breed, age, gender, and height. (We welcome all breeds!) Visit HorseandRider.com for additional instructions.

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Tack Guide

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David used his adjustable-fit, lightweight saddle to win four national endurance racing championships; his wife, Tracy, won more than 30 races. In 2014, David and Tracy started mounted shooting; each finished the season second in their respective class in national points standings. David, Tracy, and all the other shooters riding in TW saddles are proving horses run better when their saddles fit.

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Len Brown is a pioneer in the saddle world. In 1982, Len and Lisa went on a 3,000-mile pack trip through the West with five horses. All horses came back with no saddle sores and not a lost shoe or lame step.

In 1984, Len invented Flex Panels and started Ortho-Flex Saddle Company, which he still owns. It was the world's largest custom saddlery until spring 2001, when Len stopped production.

Len then created the very successful patented CorrecTOR Saddling System to eliminate sore-backed horses via a saddling system in a pad that everyone could afford. With improvements and customer demand, it has morphed into the ProTector saddling system. It is made in English, Western, and Aussie versions for any saddle and any horse.

The system includes four protective shields molded to a basic horse shape, protecting the horse at the front and rear of the saddle. Slots accept changes in back shape when riding and for different animals. As shoulders bend the shields upward, they become flexible levers to position your saddle out of the way of the horse's natural movement.

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Cody Grey Latigo

In 2010, longtime horse lover and rider Debbie Cote and her trainer, Leah Grey, decided they wanted a latigo that was safer, stronger, and easier to use than the ones typically found on the market. After careful research and planning, they came up with a design that covered all the criteria, patented it, and the Cody Grey Latigo was born.

Both women ride using the Cody Grey Latigo daily, in all kinds of weather and conditions, ensuring it stands up to the wear-and-tear of constant use by trainers and horse lovers alike.

These latigos work for all Western disciplines and are easy to put on and take off without using special tools, rawhide strings, or buckles. They stand up well to frequent use and cleaning.

Unlike a typical latigo, the Cody Grey product is uniquely designed. It distributes the weight over two significantly larger, double-notched areas, minimizing wear-and-tear while providing a stronger, safer base when riding. Yet the latigo maintains a traditional look.

Each Cody Grey leather latigo is made in California from high-quality leather and works on all Western saddles. You can special order the latigos in a range of colors, sizes, and imprints. Yet the price is a competitive \$34.95 — a great value for such a small investment.

To learn more, visit the website, or call Cody Grey Products.

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Weaver Leather

From the company's humble beginnings repairing shoes in 1973 to becoming a world leader in the industry, Weaver Leather is known for high-quality products that now include much more than leather products for horses.

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Horse & Rider



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Trail Gear Saddle Bags

Packed with features that ensure reliable performance on the trail, these bags feature lots of compartments for organized storage.



Trail Gear Cantele Bags

Built to withstand the demands of the trail, this premium quality cantele bag features grommets for secure attachment to saddle.

Your essentials stay protected and organized in these premium Trail Gear Bags

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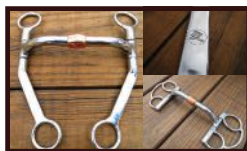


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Brenda Imus of Phoenix Rising developed the Imus 4-Beat® Saddle to specifically meet the needs of gaited horses. Not only is it designed to fit the horses that are hardest to fit, but also the tree is supple enough to allow freedom of movement in the back, loins, neck, and poll for a beautiful, free gait and fewer soundness problems.

Phoenix Rising Saddles come with unparalleled pre- and post-sale support from the knowledgeable staff, a 14-day trial period, and a one-year warranty on materials and workmanship. All of this put together means that riders who purchase these saddles can feel assured they are making the right choice for their horses and themselves.

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It's easier than ever to find training advice, but also just as easy for the interpretation and application to go wrong. Trainer Craig Johnson sets things straight on six concepts.



Training Myths

A top trainer debunks common training principles you may have been taking as gospel.

By **Craig Johnson**, With **Abigail Boatwright**

As you work with and ride your horse, you probably find yourself studying the principles of master horsemen you admire and trying to apply them. Thanks to modern media, along with clinic opportunities, doing this is as easy as it's ever been.

Yet as I've learned in my own work with horses, as well as from working with other riders in clinics, it's also easy to misunderstand and misapply certain principles. I've seen riders struggle to put concepts into practice, and seen their horses struggle to figure out what they were being asked to do.

Here, I'll strip the myths from six commonly misunderstood training principles. My goal is to give you additional insights that you can apply to your own training efforts.

MYTH: Rewarding the slightest try means rewarding any move.

BUSTED: "Try" means actually performing the task, repeatedly.

In our training of the horse, we've often heard that we're to "reward the slightest try." A clinic student summed up the problem with this myth when she said, "You know, I've been rewarding the

slightest try for three years, and all I've gotten is three years of slight tries."

Today's riders sometimes misunderstand what the masters meant as they talked about rewarding effort. I had the pleasure of studying with natural horsemen Tom Dorrance and Ray Hunt. They were cowboys, and in the cowboy language, "try" means some-

thing incredibly different than what it does to possibly the rest of the world. When a cowboy says he's going to try, it means he's going to get it done. He's not quitting until it's over.

I do agree with rewarding the slightest attempt at times. But when you talk about "rewarding the try," that means the horse actually knows he answered the request. He put some effort behind accomplishing the particular task. The horse didn't almost do it—he got it done. Rewarding the slightest "try" means hanging in there a little bit longer until the horse accomplishes that particular move or releases the pressure or whatever it is that you are asking. And not only did he know that he did the move, but he also can do it again. He can duplicate that move.

It's sometimes a mistake to reward the slightest attempt, because when you ask for it again, the horse doesn't have

any idea of what you're asking. The horse didn't intentionally obey your request the first time.

To trump this myth, you have to ask your horse to step up past slight attempts and into making a move that he can repeat on cue.

MYTH: You should reward any response with an exaggerated release.

BUSTED: The reward is a very slight release.

Let's say your goal is to teach your horse to be soft in the bridle and soft in your hands. When you pick up your hands and make contact with the bridle—whether it's a bit or a bosal—you want to feel for the moment when the horse gives to your hands a little bit, then reward with the same degree of release. Don't get carried away and release too much. When you pitch a horse inches of slack, you have to go fishing to reel it back in.

If you release at the right time, and don't overdo it, your horse will get hooked to your contact and will stay in that zone. He'll teach himself to get further release elsewhere in his body by collecting himself as he moves.

MYTH: The rider determines when and where to release.

BUSTED: The horse determines the release.

You might be surprised, but I firmly believe that it's never been my job to figure out when to give the horse a release. It is always the horse's job. I like using a steady hand. I don't like to bump and pull on the reins. A steady hand almost becomes like a post. A post has perfect timing. It knows when it can take a hold of the horse's face and it knows when to let go—*because the horse is the one making that decision.*

So, if I can hold my hands really still and steady, the horse learns exactly where they are, and how to stay off

Incorrect (top): Rather than sending a clear message to your horse, exaggerating your release by pitching the reins will cause you to have to scramble to regroup for the next task. **Correct (bottom):** A correct release, by contrast, is very slight, but your horse will notice it, come to trust that contact, and then stay in that zone.





them. He has to try other options to find release, and starts to figure it out. If he attempts to gain release in the wrong direction, my hands are instantly there without having to do anything, because I'm holding them steady.

If you release too much, all the time, this means you're watching for the slightest attempt, not the try. You're reinforcing the slight attempt only, and when you do so with complete release of any contact whatsoever, your horse learns to throw his head and be inconsistent with his nose. Not only that, but because your hands are always too busy, your horse also will get anxious about them.

MYTH: Effective hands are always bumping the horse's mouth.

BUSTED: Still hands are much more effective.

To me, good hands are still hands, because horses trust them. When your hands are still, your horse can learn to settle in and be comfortable with them. Back to the analogy of the post: The post knows when to take hold and the post knows when to turn loose. The post does nothing else. It's just there, with perfect timing every time.

You're not being harsh by holding your hands still. Just like with a post, you can decide how long or short you want to "tie" the horse. You don't tie him up short the very first time, because he has no idea what that means.

When teaching your horse to give to your contact, you pick up slack until you feel contact, and then hold there to let him figure out where he needs to go with it in order to be comfortable. When he's OK with that amount of contact, take another inch, and let him find his comfort within that. Then take another inch. Over time, your horse will trust your hands so much that he'll adjust himself as needed—just like the horse that's tied to a post. →

Incorrect (top): When you reward the slightest attempt every time you ask your horse to do something, your horse may never learn what you are asking. **Correct**

(bottom): By fixing your rein hand like a post, you enable your horse to find the spot where he gives himself a release.

Training for Pressure

High-level athletes don't train away from pressure. They train *for* it. They hone their skills to the point that they *want* the ball in the last second, because they know they can handle it. They crave competitive pressure, because it makes them perform better.

You can train a horse to be that way, too. In those situations when the game is on the line, you can call on him and he'll step up. The key lies in training him to understand that when you apply pressure, he's doing it right. And then it becomes a reward.

MYTH: A resistant horse must be stiff in his neck or nose.

BUSTED: Resistance can come from the feet.

When I'm teaching a horse to drive up in the bridle, I want him to be confident in my hands and able to search and find the release. If we're moving forward and I feel the horse brace up, I recognize that the resistance is probably coming more from the feet than it is from the neck, nose, or poll. When I feel the horse brace up during forward motion, I'll cluck and bump with my legs, driving forward more to break his feet loose. When the feet break loose, the face and the neck soften.

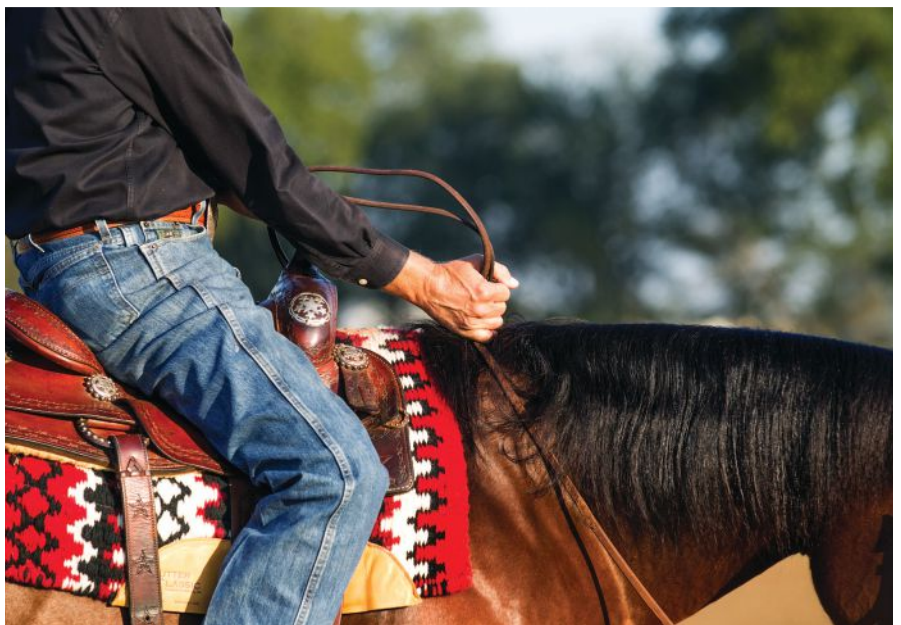
If you feel your horse pulling on you, or start to get tension on your hands, don't move your hands. Instead, keep them still, cluck, drive forward, and watch him find that soft spot.

MYTH: Put pressure on the wrong thing and reward the right thing.

BUSTED: Apply the right kind of pressure to encourage the right thing.

During the time I spent riding with

Incorrect (top): Continually releasing too much and at the wrong times creates a situation where your horse's head carriage will become inconsistent. **Correct (bottom):** Holding your hands still and steady allows your horse to learn where your release will be, and the horse will gain confidence in your position.





Incorrect (left): A resistant horse might give with its nose, but continue to resist with its feet. **Correct (right):** Driving your horse forward to break the resistance in his feet will encourage him to look for a release from that tension.

the great Tom Dorrance and Ray Hunt, I really got to understand what they meant about this concept. When they'd speak of putting pressure on the wrong thing, they weren't talking about pressure as a version of punishment. Yet that's how some riders try to apply it.

Over years of competitive riding, I've discovered that if I use pressure to tell a horse he's doing something wrong, it works against me when I ask for more effort in competition. I don't want to punish and make the horse quit what he's doing—I want to encourage him to step up his performance. To do that, I apply pressure, and that is the proper time to apply it. But the difference is your definition of pressure.

Some people think pressure is a disaster. It means things are going wrong, and it's a tense situation. But someone else's definition of pressure is great, it's go-time, and now I get to be really good.

My definition of pressure is that it's a positive thing, and not a negative. One example would be when I'm teaching a

horse to spin. I want a nice, crisp step. At its highest levels, I want to have a good bit of speed to the turn. When the horse learns the proper step and focus for the turn, and is really committed to the turn mentally, physically, and emotionally—when he's in the zone, and doing it right—that's when I'll put some pressure on to try harder. I'll cluck, and add a little squeeze or a bump with my foot. Or, I might just use my energy and ask him to go just a little bit faster. I ask in stages.

Over time, my horses understand when I ask and add that pressure, they have a green light to put in the extra effort. I've applied pressure when they're doing the job right, not when they're doing it wrong.

To incorporate this concept with your own horse, keep something in mind: When you apply pressure, the horse will do whatever he's doing at the time—only harder. If he's already doing the wrong thing, why would you want to put pressure on it?

Instead, redirect his feet by disengaging his hip. But make the move into a maneuver you planned to ask him to do, not a correction that you're riding away from. Act relaxed, like you would if the horse had been cooperating all along. Your horse will learn that he's not in trouble, and that you just want him to keep doing what he already knows how to do. This is what gives him the confidence to try again for you later. □



Craig Johnson is an NRHA Million Dollar Rider, a two-time NRHA Futurity champion, an NRHA Derby champion, a 14-time world champion, and an international reining gold medalist. The reining, Western dressage, and ranch pleasure trainer and clinician lives in Gainesville, Texas.

HorseandRider.com

For a video of one of Craig Johnson's training techniques, search for *Teach Self-Carriage* at our Web site.



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HHA

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Back on Track:
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Creative Horse:
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March 29- April 4



Arbico:
Fly Eliminators Bag

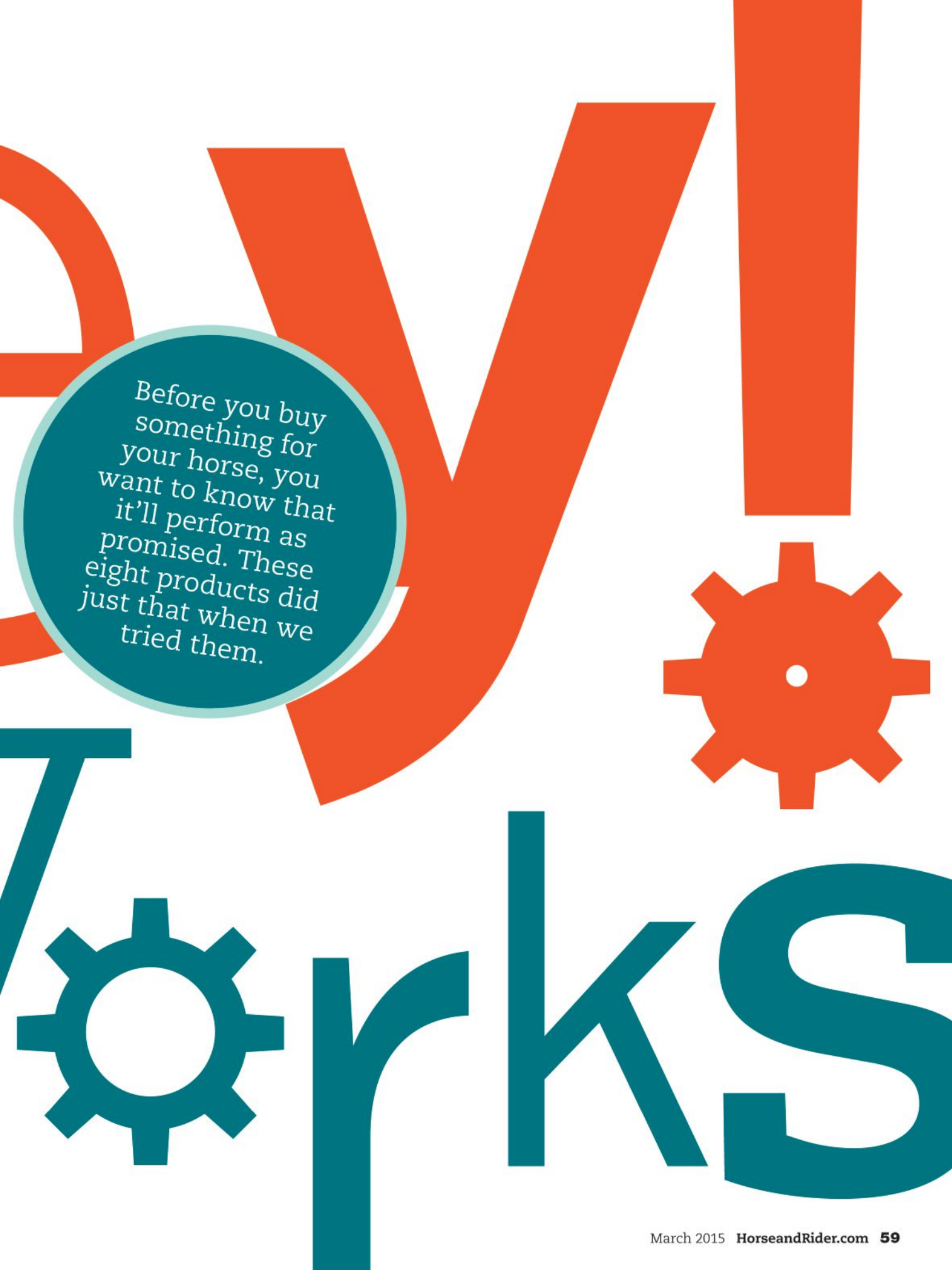


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HE W



By Jennifer
von Geldern

The background features a large, bold orange exclamation mark and the word 'orks' in a large, teal, sans-serif font. Two orange gears are also present: one in the upper right and one in the lower left, partially overlapping the 'orks' text.

Before you buy something for your horse, you want to know that it'll perform as promised. These eight products did just that when we tried them.

IF YOU HAVE HORSES, you know some products truly work and are worth every cent paid. Maybe it's a timeworn stable-cleaning utensil that remains the most efficient item in your arsenal, a grooming tool that's the first thing you reach for in your tote, or a piece of tack that never fails to fit and perform exactly as it should.

Here, we'll provide a glimpse of eight products that we've found to be true performers. They're well constructed, made of high-quality material, are cleverly designed, and—bottom line—they get the job done. We'll look at each, and let you know about materials and construction, what the manufacturers claim their products can do, and what we found out for ourselves in testing those products on real horses and at real barns.



Stall-Feeding Solution

The product: Free-Up Feeder with heavy-duty netting, from Simple Feeding Solutions.

The claim: This slow-feed hay net is great for feeding in a stall. The manufacturer claims you can fill it in under 30 seconds, so it can streamline your workload at feeding time.

How it works: There's assembly required with this hay net, but it's nothing strenuous. Placing the net on the frame is a cinch, and all hardware is included for attaching it to the wall of your stall. Plus, you'll find helpful installation videos on the Web site.

The feeder's frame has rounded corners for safety, and the slow-feed net keeps horses busy, slows their hay consumption to a healthier pace, and helps reduce waste. This means you save money in the way of fewer barn repairs for damage caused by bored horses, fewer digestive-upset calls to the vet due to horses eating too fast, and less of your hay wasted on the floor.

Filling the net is about as easy and mess-free as you can expect, and it holds up to half of a small bale of hay.

Inside scoop: You can purchase replacement nets for this feeder if your net wears out. The manufacturer offers a 30-day money-back guarantee for a full refund, as well as a 90-day satisfaction guarantee for any repairs you might need in that timeframe.

Learn more: (715) 483-1770; haychix.com.

Price: \$65.00

Cool, Quiet, Powerful

The product: KM 10 brushless two-speed professional clippers, from Wahl Clipper Corporation.

The claim: Brushless-motor clipper delivers superior performance and increased power and torque, all while remaining efficient on constant speed control. It automatically delivers more power as needed when clipping thick coats. The clipper is lightweight, ergonomic, quiet, and powerful.

How it works: This is indeed an impressive clipper, and I've used many. The claims of powerful, lightweight, comfortable, and quiet are absolutely true. Furthermore, I found that the KM 10 runs cool, taking much longer to heat up than other clippers I've used. The constant speed control helps the blades glide easily through areas of thick or heavy hair. The long cord is very helpful in maneuvering around the horse. Its quiet, cool, lightweight qualities, backed by lots of power from the motor, make it a pleasure to use and make clipping more fun than a chore.

Inside scoop: The KM 10 is German-engineered, with a no-maintenance motor and 3000 and 3700 SPM speed levels, and weighs only 12.3 oz. It comes with a #10 Ultimate Competition Series detachable blade set, cleaning brush, and blade oil, and features a 14-foot, flexible cord. Wahl Clipper Corporation is so confident in this clipper that it offers a 5-year warranty.

Learn more: (800) 776-9245; wahlanimal.com.

Price: \$279.96





Convenient Hoof Care

The product: DAVIS Horse Boot (Medicine Boot), from Davis Manufacturing, Inc.

The claim: Also known as the medicine or poultice boot, the DAVIS Horse Boot may be used for a variety of applications where treatment or protection is needed. Boots can be used for soaking, poulticing, and conditioning. Also, they can be used to keep the hoof clean and dry or for direct application of medicine to treat abscesses, thrush, puncture wounds, or other foot conditions. Using this boot also will relieve pressure when signs of bruising, corns, or cankers appear.

How it works: This boot works exactly as claimed. It can keep a sore or fragile hoof protected and dry, and it also can be used to conveniently apply medications to the hoof or the coronet. It's great for a horse that refuses to stand in a bucket for soaking treatment—just fill the boot with your chosen soaking fluid. Available in a variety of sizes, it can fit a shod or unshod hoof, or accommodate a wrapped hoof.

I used a disposable baby diaper to pad the hoof, then easily slipped the wrapped hoof into the boot's wide opening. An adjustable strap at the top of the boot in the horse's pastern region helps prevent the boot from slipping off, though its design helps keep a well-fitted boot in place. Horses are able to walk nicely in the boot, and it's durable enough to hold up well on a horse in a stall or other confined area. (Designed for therapeutic use, it's not intended for use while riding or for a horse likely to gallop in turnout.)

Inside scoop: The soft, pliable upper won't aggravate the leg during use and closes snugly just below the fetlock, and the boot opens wide for easy on-off application. The durable triple-layered bottom is made of a tough polyvinyl compound making it reusable many times over. It's available in eight sizes and is made in America.

Learn more: (800) 252-4884; davismanufacturing.com.

Price: Ranges from \$40.23 for size 00 to \$62.44 for size 6.

Clean, Contained Hay

The product: Savvy Feeder, from The Creative Horse, LLC.

The claim: The Savvy Feeder reduces a horse's chance of ingesting sand, rocks, manure, urine-soaked bedding, and parasites by keeping hay contained and off the ground. It allows a horse to forage in a natural head-down position, creating correct jaw alignment and chewing motion, and reducing risk of guttural pouch infection. It also helps eliminate boredom, nervousness, and frustration, and prolongs the eating process by about 4 to 6 times over eating off the ground, reducing the chance of ulcers. Plus, it keeps costly hay from blowing away in the wind or being trampled into the ground.

How it works: This ingenious feeder conquers several problems when feeding our horses: wasted hay, horses bolting their feed, and horses ingesting debris of all kinds. The key to its success is a grate that "floats" on top of the hay and helps contain it, while also slowing the horse's eating. The grate drops down as hay is eaten through it, always forming a perfect feeding platform.

It felt great to see my horse eating with his head down in a natural eating position, and I appreciated knowing that the hay he normally drags out into his muddy paddock would stay clean and in place. The feeder is lightweight enough (23 pounds) that it can be used just about anywhere—paddocks or stalls—or pack it along to shows or horse camping.

Inside scoop: The Savvy Feeder, which can hold up to 18 pounds, is made of incredibly durable, slightly flexible plastic that horses can't destroy. It comes in six bright colors, and can have an optional metal plate personalized by engraving.

Learn more: (701) 793-7289; savvyfeeder.com.

Price: \$299.00 →





Savory Stall Toy

The product: Boredom Breaker, from Likit.

The claim: Tested by behaviorists and veterinarians, this product reduces a horse's boredom and frustration in the stable. Designed to hold delicious Likit refills, the Boredom Breaker stable toy is proven to have a beneficial effect on equine welfare, providing environmental enrichment by keeping the horse occupied and entertained when stabled. Use in conjunction with flavored, electrolyte, or salt Likits for hours of fun.

How it works: This product looks every bit like a toy—bright and whimsical—yet can play a critical role with some stabled horses, giving them an outlet for boredom or frustration during stall confinement. It requires a minor amount of assembly, mostly snapping the sweet-smelling Likit treats into place within the toy's structure. After that, it's simply a matter of finding the ideal place to suspend the treat-laden toy so that it hangs at least 3 feet from a wall and about withers-high for the horse. My horse was immediately intrigued with his new toy, and took a fancy to the treats right away. The Boredom Breaker, sufficiently tough enough for horseplay, continues to hold his interest with the lure of Likit treats displayed on multiple surfaces.

Inside scoop: This combination toy includes a Likit holder and a robust ball made of rubberized polyethylene, and has three places for adding Likit treats (sold separately). It features multi-directional movement, holds one standard (650g) Likit and one or two small Likit (250g) treats, and includes a hanging rope. It measures 8-by-8-by-16 inches, and the rope is 48 inches long with snap.

Learn more: (800) 872-3353; likit.com.

Price: \$44.95 for the Boredom Breaker, \$6.95 for Likit treat refill, and \$4.95 for Little Likit treat refill.

Super Cinch

The product: AirFlex Cinch with Roll Snug Buckle, from Weaver Leather.

The claim: These patented, state-of-the-art performance cinches use unique, white cool flex foam that doesn't absorb heat like black neoprene. Distinctive molded airflow channels maximize air circulation, providing breathability and ideal flexibility. Padded flex edges move with the horse for extra cushioning when needed. Equal-pull design provides even pressure across the cinch.

How it works: Sturdy, high-quality materials are everything you'd expect from this company's products, and the AirFlex Cinch is no exception. The cinch's white air-flow channels give it a high-tech look, but they don't overpower the need for a conservative appearance; it'll suit performance competitors just as well as recreational riders. The new and improved Roll Snug Cinch Buckle, first made popular on the company's Smart Cinch, is brilliant and effective.

The cinch's foam air-flow channels allowed for some circulation of air, keeping my horse's girth area less sweaty, but also provided a good cushiony grip, so my saddle never felt like it would slip. Also, this cinch is very easy to clean. Mud and sweat rinse easily away, and the cinch dries very quickly.



Inside scoop: A proprietary manufacturing process creates AirFlex's exclusive air-flow channels and adds a patented Roll Snug Cinch Buckle or flat buckle to suit riders' needs. The Roll Snug Cinch Buckle increases leverage for easier cinching, smoother rolling, and exceptional performance. The cinch, with black poly top and stainless-steel buckles and dees, is available in straight or roper styles and a wide range of sizes.

Learn more: (800) 932-8371; ridethebrand.com.

Price: Straight cinch, \$69.99; roper cinch, \$73.99.

LOOKING FOR YOUR NEXT PROSPECT?



Gentled American Mustangs available for \$125 adoption fee through the MHF Trainer Incentive Program.


Mustang
HERITAGE
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There are over 45,000 American Mustangs in holding facilities waiting for adoption. The Mustang Heritage Foundation pays qualified trainers \$700 - \$800 to gentle and find adoptive homes for these horses through the Trainer Incentive Program.

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mustangheritagefoundation.org

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HORSEMAN**


Mustang
HERITAGE
FOUNDATION
Our Land. Our Horse.™


Wild
Horse
Land
Bureau
Program
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Keep Your Cool

The product: 6530F Female HyperKewl Evaporative Cooling Vest, from TechNiche International.

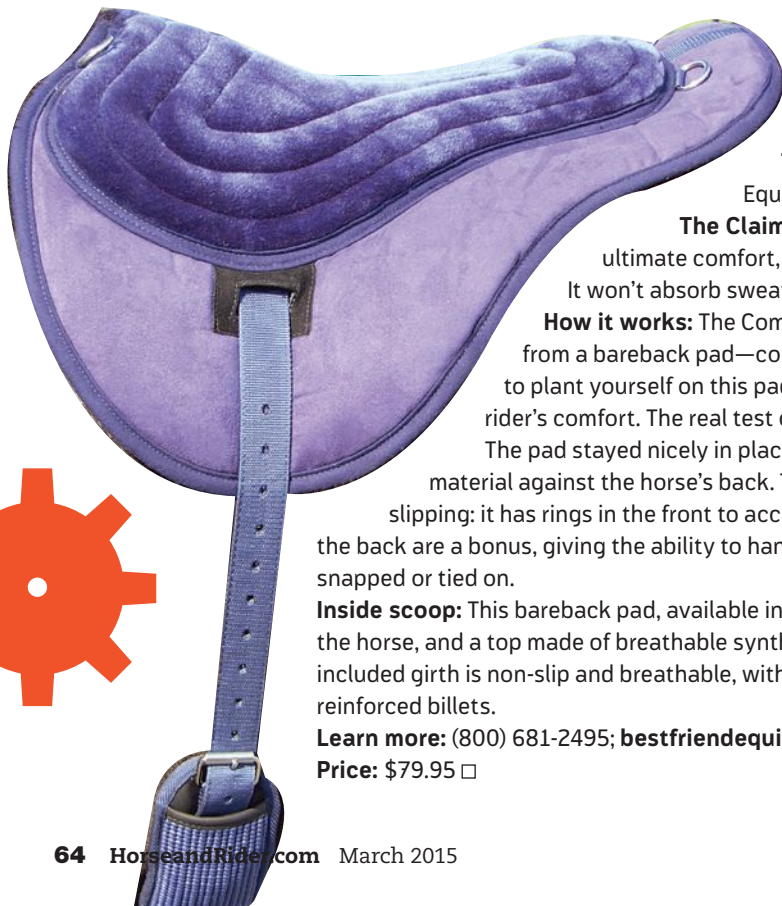
The claim: Giving hours of heat relief, these vests are ideal for the active outdoorsperson. They cool through evaporation, representing an easy and efficient way to cool down and avoid heat stress. They're also lightweight, durable, and reusable. This model is designed to be flattering to the female form.

How it works: The vest gives a sporty look, complete with sloped pockets and black, mesh side panels for a slimming appearance, while allowing full range of motion. Best of all: It works. Riding in hot weather becomes much more tolerable with the vest on; however, dry climates allow it to work as it's designed, through evaporative cooling, far better than humid climates where there's already moisture in the air. A bit of airflow, either from a breeze or movement on your horse, helps evaporation, too. Be prepared for the vest to feel wet at first; soaking it in water before wearing is fundamental to how it works. Over a few hours, as the water evaporates—cooling you as it does—the vest dries out, but can be re-soaked for as much use as you need.

Inside scoop: Available in silver, khaki, black, and royal blue, and in small to 2X sizes, this vest has a high mandarin collar for additional cooling relief and sun protection. It has handy front pockets and zipper closure, and is designed especially for women (unique built-in elastic strap helps contour the vest to the female form). It features a quilted nylon outer with HyperKewl fabric inner and water-repellent nylon liner, and black poly-cotton trim. Receive a 10-percent discount on entire purchase on the Staywarm-Staycool Web site with promo code HorseRiderMag.

Learn more: (760) 213-0702; staywarm-staycool.com.

Price: \$59.99



Bareback Bliss

The product: Comfort Plus Bareback Pad, from Best Friend Equine Supply, Inc.

The Claim: The Comfort Plus Bareback Pad offers a natural seat with ultimate comfort, and is contoured to fit your horse's back and stay in place. It won't absorb sweat and is easy to clean.

How it works: The Comfort Plus delivers on the two things most of us want most from a bareback pad—comfort for our rumps and no slipping. It feels quite luxurious to plant yourself on this pad, since it has a specifically cushioned seat area for the rider's comfort. The real test comes when you actually start riding.

The pad stayed nicely in place on my horse, a tribute to the effectiveness of its non-slip material against the horse's back. The Comfort Plus goes a step farther, however, to prevent slipping: it has rings in the front to accommodate a breast collar, if the need arises. Rings in the back are a bonus, giving the ability to hang water bottles, trail bags, or any other item that can be snapped or tied on.

Inside scoop: This bareback pad, available in blue or black, features non-slip breathable material against the horse, and a top made of breathable synthetic suede with short-nap fleece overlay for luxury. The included girth is non-slip and breathable, with stainless-steel roller buckles and straps with leather-reinforced billets.

Learn more: (800) 681-2495; bestfriendequine.com.

Price: \$79.95 □

Flu strains are always changing. Give your horse the vaccine that's kept up.

Don't settle for an outdated influenza vaccine

Getting a flu shot each year is second nature for most people. Although it has been thought of as a risk-based vaccine for horses, in reality, most horses could be at risk. As human influenza flooded the news in late 2014, it's time to take a closer look at what makes some equine influenza vaccines work better than others.

Not your grandpa's flu strain

Influenza viruses, human and equine, change as time goes by through a process called antigenic drift. Influenza vaccines need to be constantly updated to reflect this change in the circulating flu strains.

Antigenic drift occurs in both human and equine influenza, and different organizations work to prevent flu outbreaks by determining the current circulating viruses and then recommending what strains should be included in vaccines.

For humans, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) predicts which strains will be circulating in the next flu season. However, because of antigenic drift, there is occasionally a new strain circulating that was not included in the year's vaccine. Such was the case late last year when the CDC announced the 2014 influenza vaccine would not be as effective against the current circulating flu strains.

For horses, the Organization of International Epizootes (OIE) has an Expert Surveillance Panel on Equine Influenza consisting of globally recognized influenza researchers. Their recommendation, based on monitoring influenza viruses and antigenic drift, includes vaccinating for Florida Clade 1 and Clade 2 strains of the equine influenza virus.

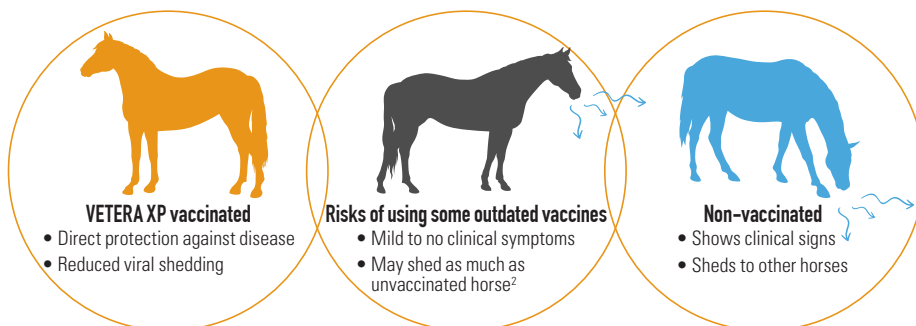
Outdated vaccines put horses at risk

If your influenza vaccine doesn't include the Florida Clade 1 and Clade 2 strains, it's outdated and your horse is not getting full protection. An outdated vaccine can put your horses at risk by means of:

- Viral shedding. Even if your horse does not get visibly sick, it can shed the virus to other horses as much as an unvaccinated horse.¹
- A lower level of protection. An outdated vaccine is less effective than one containing currently circulating strains.²

Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica, Inc. is the only vaccine manufacturer that has followed OIE Expert Surveillance Panel on Equine Influenza's recommendation to include both Florida Clade 1 and Clade 2 equine influenza strains in its vaccines. The Vetera® XP vaccine line provides direct antibody protection from the most recent strains of equine influenza to ensure your horse receives the highest level of protection.

Vaccines with relevant flu strains and direct protection decrease viral shedding.



¹. Cullinane A and Newton JR. Equine influenza — A global perspective. *Vet Microbiol* 2013;167(1–2):205–214. ². Paillot R, Prowse L, Montesso F, et.al. Whole inactivated equine influenza vaccine: Efficacy against a representative Clade 2 equine influenza virus, IFN- γ synthesis and duration of humoral immunity. *Vet Microbiol* 2013;162(2–4):396–407.

www.bi-vetmedica.com

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The Perfect Patient

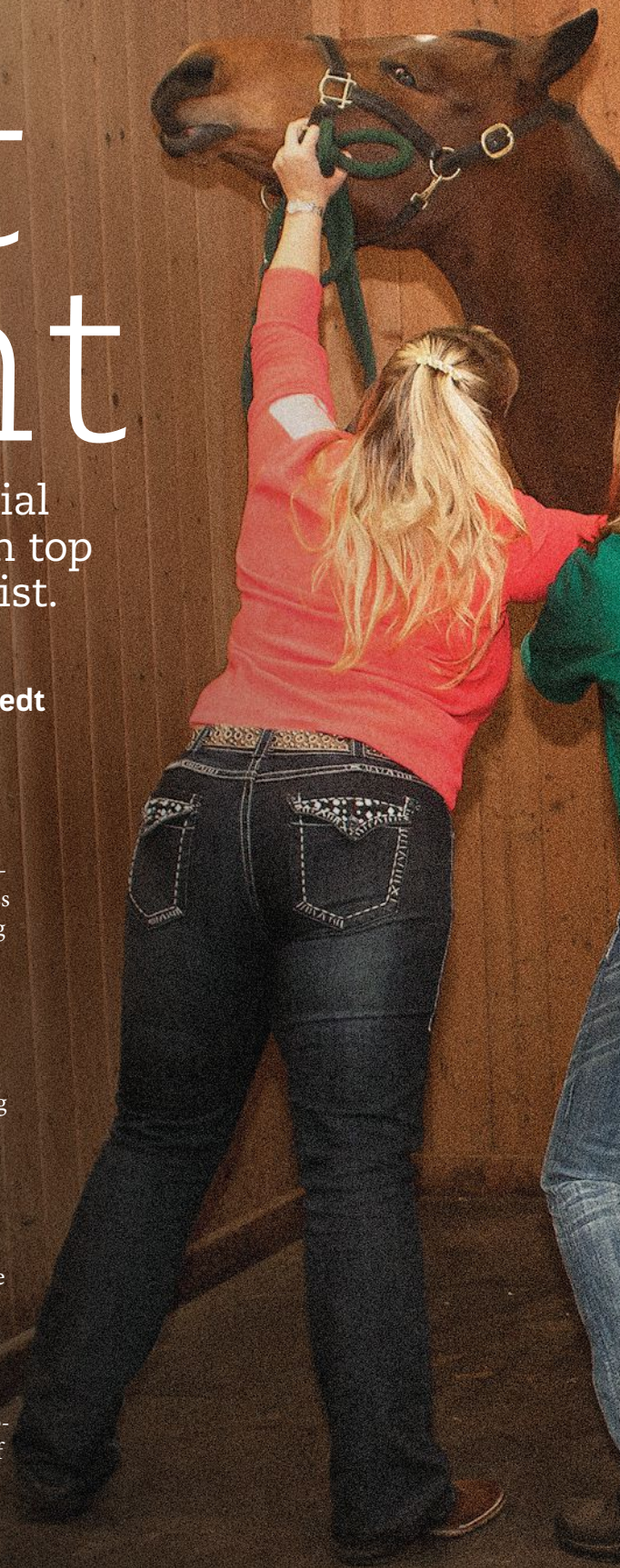
Teach your horse seven essential skills that will put him right on top of your vet's 'favorite patient' list.

By **Barb Crabbe, DVM** Photos by **Jim Bortvedt**

THE CALL WAS TO SUTURE A WOUND. And what a wound it was! Even from across the barn, a gaping hole in the horse's shoulder, at least 10 inches long, was easy to see. Good thing, because across the barn was the closest I could get. After watching my (very skilled) technician unsuccessfully attempt to capture the injured horse in his stall while deftly avoiding snapping teeth and flying feet, I finally said, "Forget it. If we can't even catch him, chances are slim we'll be able to treat him. And no one needs to get hurt."

I don't give up very easily—but when it comes to bad-behaving horses, enough is enough. Did that wound ever get sutured? Yes, it did. After fighting with the horse for several hours, the trainer was able to administer a dose of oral sedation, followed two hours later by an intramuscular dose once the oral meds kicked in. When I returned to the barn three hours later, I got just close enough to administer intravenous sedation. With the poor horse drugged and twitched, I was finally able to treat the wound.

Sound like a nightmare? Oh, yes. Yet it happens all the time. And it might have been worse! The extra time and expense of an additional farm call and several doses of sedation weren't the only real problems that owner faced. What would have happened if we'd never been able to treat the wound at all? What if it involved an artery with life-threatening blood loss? →



If your horse won't stand quietly for veterinary care, you've got some training to do. Follow the steps here, helping your horse become a better patient.



Skill No. 1



Skill No. 2



If I can't catch your horse when emergency strikes, or handle him once I do, chances are I can't save his life.

Don't let your horse be the veterinarian's nightmare. Help him become the perfect patient instead! In this article, I'll teach you seven essential skills that will turn your horse into the perfect patient. I'll tell you what they are, how they'll help me treat your horse, and the steps you'll need to take to teach them. (For a review of basic training principles, refer to the sidebar on page 70.)

The Basics

"I just don't understand. He never acts that way with me!" I've heard this comment at least a thousand times. So why is it that your horse is perfectly fine for you—yet the minute he sees the vet, he becomes a raging lunatic? Let's face it: Most of the things I do to your horse are things he doesn't necessarily enjoy. I stick him with needles, clean and treat painful wounds or skin conditions, run tubes up his nose, and sometimes even bury my whole arm in his rectum. Your horse may be a perfect angel when things are going his way, but when was the last time you asked

him to behave himself for something he really didn't like?

The skills I'm going to suggest you teach your horse will help you in a variety of different ways. They'll give you a tool to calm him when he's anxious or afraid, will help you establish yourself as the "boss horse" of your herd of two, and will make it easier to apply restraint when he still says "no." And they'll build upon one another until you have a toolbox full of tricks to help both calm and restrain your horse during unpleasant events. Finally, by teaching your horse to do these things for you, you'll be installing "buttons" I can use to encourage him to behave for me.

Skill No. 1: Turn to face.

You'll teach your horse to turn to face you when you approach.

Problems solved: Your horse is a prey animal. The first thing he's likely to do when he anticipates something unpleasant coming his direction is to turn and run away. When he's in his stall, this might mean hiding his head in the corner. And if he's really feeling defensive, this puts him in a perfect position to kick you when you approach.

By teaching him a cue to turn, face, and even approach you, you (and I!) will be able to catch him easily and safely—the first necessary step in any interaction.

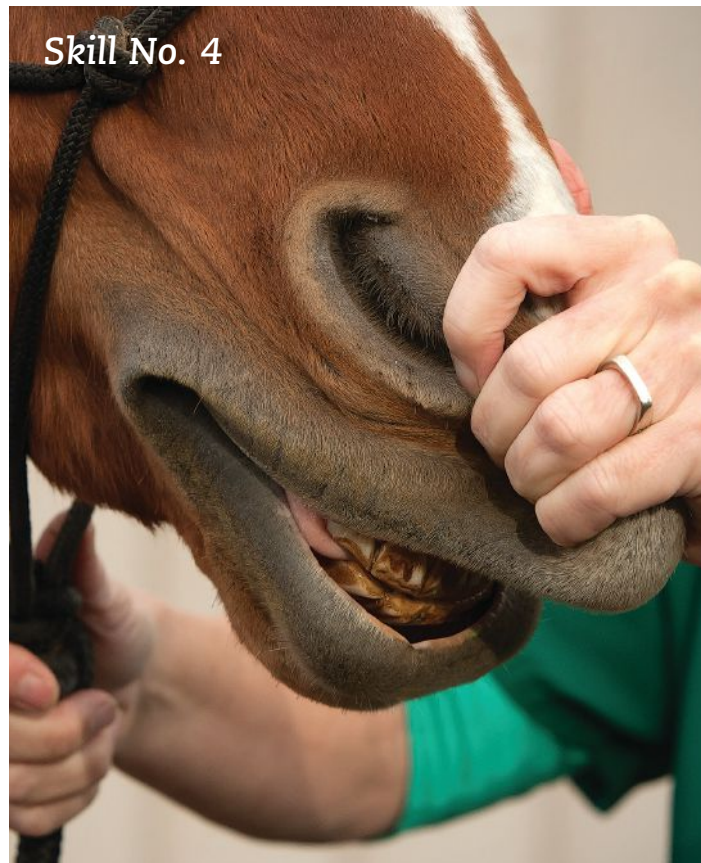
How to do it: Stand at your horse's stall door with his halter in your left hand and the end of the lead rope in your right. If your horse puts his head in the corner and turns his hindquarters toward you, take an assertive step forward and swing the lead rope toward his tail. (It's even OK if the rope connects with his hind end, but make sure you stay far enough away to avoid being kicked.) The minute he turns his hindquarters away (and he will), step back and offer praise—especially if he turns his head and looks in your direction. Repeat this step every time he turns away, backing off immediately when he turns to look at you. Eventually, he'll turn to face you, or even take a step in your direction. If you're patient and consistent (he never gets to turn his hindquarters toward you), you'll soon have him walking up to you each time you approach. If he doesn't, all it should take is a flick of the rope.

Skill No. 2: Head down.

You'll teach your horse to put his head



Skill No. 3



Skill No. 4

down in response to a touch to his poll.

Problems solved: Teaching your horse a head-down response is one of the most powerful cues in your toolbox, and will come in handy in a variety of situations. When your horse is excited, he raises his head to have the best possible view of his surroundings. When he drops his head, there will be an instant drop in his energy (and anxiety) as well. Is your horse afraid of certain livestock and machinery, or over-stimulated by a new environment? A simple touch is all it should take to help calm him down.

The head-down response also will come in handy when you have to bridle your horse, or handle his head for something potentially unpleasant, such as clipping his muzzle or pulling a foreign body out of his mouth. Finally, it's a building block for Skill No. 4 (application of a twitch) and Skill No. 7 (administering oral meds).

How to do it: Stand by your horse, and place your right hand on his poll. (If he won't allow this first step, you'll need to spend some time gradually desensitizing him, working your way gradually up his neck until he'll stand quietly with

your hand on his poll.) With your hand on his poll, apply a little steady, downward pressure. The second you feel your horse's head drop, even if by just a fraction of an inch, release the pressure and say "good job." Then repeat. Continue repeating this step until your horse's head drops all the way to the ground. Timing is critical: You must release immediately when his head drops even a tiny bit. If you're consistent, you can teach even the most recalcitrant horse a solid head-down response within 10 or 15 minutes. And once this button is installed, you'll be able to get him to drop his head (and energy) any time you touch his poll.

Skill No. 3: Pick up feet with rope.

You'll teach your horse to pick up his feet in response to pressure from a rope.

Problems solved: Working on your horse's feet is a common, and often necessary event. Whether it's for trimming and shoeing, treating a wound, opening a sole abscess, or administering a nerve block as a part of a lameness exam, your horse must willingly pick up a foot, and allow you, your vet,

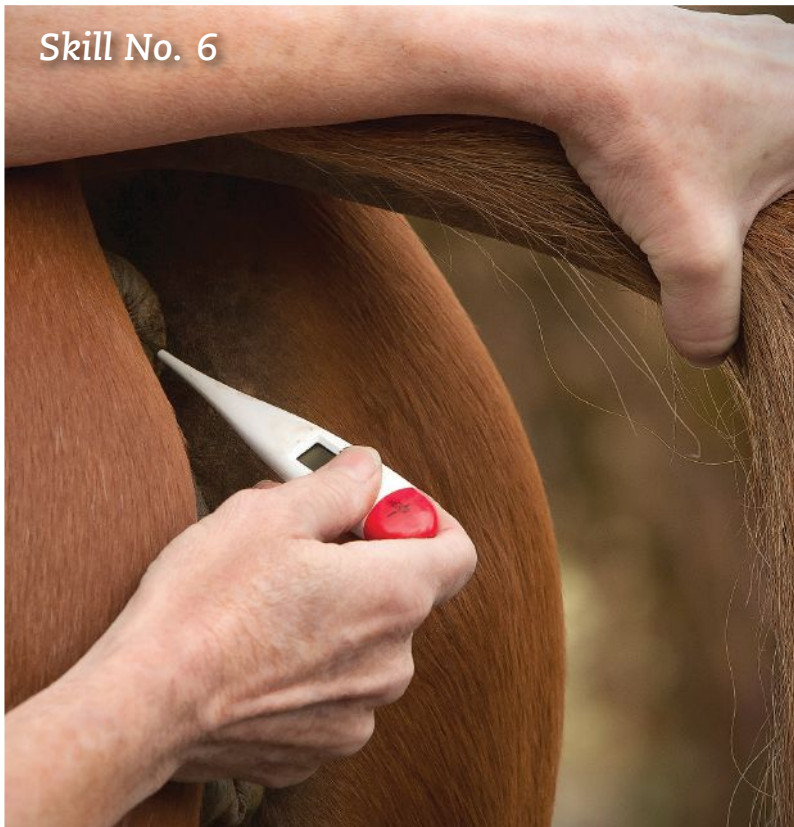
and your farrier to hold it up. If your horse refuses to pick up a foot when asked, jerks it away after a short period of time, or throws a fit when asked to stand on three legs, it not only becomes impossible to provide proper care, but also puts his caregivers at risk for injury. By teaching your horse to allow his feet to be picked up with a rope, you have a way to safely overcome foot-handling difficulties.

How to do it: As with the head-down response, you may need to desensitize your horse to the rope around his legs before you start. Simply spend as much time as you need to make him comfortable with the rope draped around his legs. Once he'll let you place it there, start by looping the rope around his pastern, just underneath his fetlock joint. Hold both ends of the rope in one hand (while holding your horse in the other), and apply gentle, up-and-forward pressure. As soon as your horse moves his leg even a tiny bit, release the pressure. Then repeat. Each time your horse moves his leg in response to pressure, release and repeat; he'll eventually lift his foot and hold it in the air. You can teach this response on all four

Skill No. 5



Skill No. 6



legs. Once you've mastered this skill, you'll be much more successful picking up your horse's feet and holding them up for however long it's needed.

Skill No. 4: Hand-twitch.

You'll teach your horse to allow you to firmly grasp his muzzle.

Problems solved: If your horse is sick or injured, and he resists my efforts to help him, a twitch can be a powerful tool—but only if I can apply one. Many horses violently fling their heads in the air the minute I grasp their noses or approach them with a twitch. By teach-

ing your horse to tolerate a hand twitch (use of your hand alone), this technique can be used for light restraint. It also will set the stage for a real twitch to be applied when needed. Finally, it's an important step for successfully teaching Skill No. 7 (administering an oral medication).

How to do it: Begin by asking your horse to put his head down, using the head-down cue you've already taught. Then gradually habituate him to your hand touching, holding, and ultimately firmly grasping his muzzle. Each time he resists by raising his head, ask him

to put his head down and try again. When he allows you to touch, hold, or grasp, reward him by immediately letting go and administering a reward.

Skill No. 5: Shoulder roll.

You'll teach your horse to allow you to grasp and hold the loose skin at the base of his neck.

Problems solved: Like a nose twitch, a shoulder roll can be a powerful restraint tool when your horse says "no." It allows you to stay in a safe position when working with a horse that responds by kicking, striking, or body-

Behavior Terms Defined

Training horses involves three techniques: desensitization, negative reinforcement, and positive reinforcement. All three should be a part of your training repertoire, often used in combination for best results.

Desensitization depends on a decreased response to a stimulus after it's repeatedly presented. Desensitization is the most basic form of learning, and is especially important for your horse; as a prey animal, his instincts often tell him to react to stimuli before thinking things through.

Negative reinforcement, contrary to popular belief, doesn't mean punishment. Instead, this strategy involves removing an aversive stimulus in response to a positive reaction. This is the foundation of most training methods that rely on the release of pressure to encourage a response.

Positive reinforcement is the addition of a reward following a desired behavior. In horse training, this often means a verbal reward ("good boy"), a pat, or a food treat. This is also the foundation of clicker training, where the clicker becomes the reward. Studies show that positive reinforcement is incredibly powerful, especially if it's administered intermittently. So reward your horse, and reward him often—but don't reward him every single time he gives a positive response.



slamming you when he's resistant. This restraint technique is especially useful when your vet needs to administer an injection or draw blood from a recalcitrant horse without help. Many horses react violently when you first grasp the skin in this area, especially if they anticipate unpleasantness to come. If you can teach your horse to tolerate this handhold in the absence of unpleasantness, it will be much easier to apply, and more effective when you really need it.

How to do it: Similar to teaching your horse to allow a hand twitch, you'll begin by desensitizing your horse to your hand—in this case, to its being placed at the base of his neck. Once he'll tolerate a touch, you can gradually increase the intensity of the touch—progressing to a pinch, grasp, and eventually a strong hold. By using a combination of desensitization (gradual increase of intensity) and positive reinforcement (reward when he stands quietly), he'll eventually learn to tolerate the application of a shoulder roll.

Skill No. 6: Tail touch and taking temp.

You'll desensitize your horse to having

his tail lifted and a thermometer placed in his rectum.

Problems solved: When your horse is sick or injured, taking his temperature is an important part of a basic health evaluation. If your horse clamps his tail or threatens to kick, it can become impossible to insert the thermometer. Not only that, but it's also generally much easier (and safer) for me to perform a rectal exam when your horse is colicky if he's tolerant to handling around his hind end.

How to do it: Desensitization is the key to developing this skill. Have a friend hold your horse and cue him to put his head down. Stand to the side of your horse's flank and place your hand around the top of his tail. If your horse tenses up or threatens to kick, back off and have your friend ask him to put his head down to help him relax. Gradually progress until you can lift your horse's tail, touch his rectum, and eventually insert the lubricated thermometer without resistance.

Skill No. 7: Oral meds.

You'll teach your horse to tolerate a syringe of medication in his mouth.

Problems solved: Administering oral medications is a necessary evil when it comes to caring for your horse—even if it's simply to administer a dewormer twice a year. If your horse flings his head and slams his body into the wall when you approach him with a dosing syringe, teaching this skill will put that problem to rest.

How to do it: Once again, you'll begin by asking your horse to drop his head using your head-down cue. If you've already taught him to tolerate a hand twitch, he should be desensitized to handling around his mouth as well. Load a dosing syringe with a yummy-tasting substance, such as applesauce or sugar water. With your horse's head in a lowered position, and a light hand twitch applied, you should be able to easily administer a small amount of the sweet substance—which provides an immediate reward. If your horse is historically naughty for oral medications, repeat this several times each week until your horse looks at the dose syringe as a treat. Chances are he'll hardly notice the next time you have to administer a medication instead. □

Protection From the Long Haul

Leg support ensures that your horse arrives at his destination with his best legs beneath him.

Produced by **Alexis Bennett**

THE RECYCLER

Model: VenTECH all-purpose combo wrap.

Maker: Professional's Choice.

Why buy: The wrap conforms to your horse's legs and has additional suspensory straps for support, while a ventilated neoprene outer layer allows airflow for heat dispersion.

Cool features: The lightweight, moisture-wicking liners can be removed and replaced easily, and extra liners are available for purchase.

More info: (800) 331-9421; profchoice.com.

Price: \$84.95; price includes a set of liners.



THE BASIC

Model: Polo wraps.

Maker: Classic Equine.

Why buy: A set of fleece wraps is a cost-effective alternative to fully equipped shipping boots and can also be used for performance purposes in the arena.

Cool features: Multiple patterns or solids available, and each set includes a laundry bag that makes cleaning quick and easy.

More info: (800) 654-7864; equibrand.com.

Price: \$32.95



THE HOOF MASTER

Model: Shipping boots.

Maker: Weaver.

Why buy: The 600-denier outer shell and fleece liner offer comfort for long travel. Striker plates at the bottom of each boot add extra protection for your horse against hoof scrapes or scuffs.

Cool feature: Three different sizes are available for an identical price to accommodate horses ranging in height from 14 to 16 or more hands.

More info: (800) 932-8371; ridethebrand.com.

Price: \$80.39



THE RITZ

Model: Trailering boots with Textilene.

Maker: Kensington Products.

Why buy: The nylon boots are contoured to fit the front or rear legs easily while providing freedom of movement. The Textilene mesh outer shell is mildew-resistant and won't easily fade.

Cool feature: An inner core of foam and hollow fiberfill absorbs vibration, so your horse's legs don't have to.

More info: (877) 469-1240; kensingtonproducts.com.

Price: \$159.99



SAVVY SHIPPING SUGGESTIONS

Trailering can be a stressful experience for your horse, especially during long trips, which can cause trailering-related health issues. Help your horse have an easy and comfortable ride by planning ahead with these tips.

Happy tummy. Offer a drink at every stop, every few hours. Bring water from home so it'll taste familiar to your horse, or add Kool-Aid mix to make it more palatable for difficult drinkers. Bring hay from home as well (at least enough to get him through the trip, plus a few days at the new location). Avoid grains, new feeds, or high-carb feeds before a long trip to lessen risk of gastric discomfort.

Footing basics. Make sure that your trailer's mats are level and in good repair. Clean excess shavings and manure from

beneath them if necessary. Before the trip, add extra shavings that'll help soak up urine and provide cushion.

First-aid first. A well-stocked first-aid kit is a must. Have both a thermometer and stethoscope on hand to check your horse's temperature and gut sounds at each travel break. Prepare the basics ahead of time, such as bandaging material, wound-care solution, saline, and anti-inflammatory medications. (See "Trail Terrors, Part 1: First-Aid Kit" at HorseandRider.com for an itemized safety-kit list.)

Travel kit. Don't leave home without your horse's paperwork (negative Coggins test, health certificate, brand-inspection paperwork, and/or vaccination records). If you're traveling out of state, check local requirements before you hit the road.

ICE-VIBE

CIRCULATION THERAPY

BY
HORSEWARE
IRELAND



Full Boot



Knee Wrap



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Falling Out of Lead

Kristi Berg offers tips to keep a horse from falling out of lead when loping with speed.

Produced and Photographed by **Jennifer Paulson**

Q My horse slips out of lead behind when we lope large, fast circles. What can I do at home to work on this problem, and what should I do in the show pen to prevent it from happening?

MIKAYLA BROWN, Kansas

A It's frustrating when a horse regularly falls out of lead during fast circles, especially if you compete and get hit with a penalty every time it happens.

I suggest starting with a hard look at yourself before you blame your horse for this problem. Are you riding centered above your horse? If not, your leaning can make him lean, too, predisposing him to fall out of lead. Do you anticipate the mistake? Anticipation can will it to happen. Are you overcorrecting a smaller problem? You also can cause lead problems by pushing your horse crooked the other way by moving his hip over too far, or by picking up his shoulder too much.

Think about using both legs and centering your hands. Even if your horse is uneven, you should be centered. It'll lead your horse to correct himself, because the only way he'll find the middle (and straightness) is if you're there.

Once you're sure that you're not the cause of the problem, here are three other measures to take.

Get Squared-Up

Be sure that your horse is loping squarely between your hands and legs. By that, I mean his shoulders are up, his hindquarters are underneath him, and his head and neck are in alignment with his spine.



By anticipating your horse making any mistake, including changing leads behind, you can will it to happen. Instead, maintain your body position yet be prepared to correct the mistake if it happens.



TOP: For maintaining your horse's straightness, it's essential that you ride centered above him. If you lean in one direction, he will, too, and that increases the chance that he'll fall out of lead behind. **ABOVE:** If your horse falls out of lead, quietly and softly stop him, gently drawing him into the ground rather than stopping hard. You can see that my horse is pretty stiff here, further hindering her straightness.

You want the horse right between your reins and legs. It's something you'll feel. Lift your rein hand in the center, over the saddle horn, and place pressure on your horse's sides until you feel like there's the same amount of horse on each side of an invisible line that goes down your horse's spine. When you square up, he'll place less pressure on the reins, so you might even feel the weight come off your hands.

You don't want to see more of the horse on either side of the reins. Instead, look for an even amount of horse under your hands. You'll probably need to look down to get the visual at first, but then you'll be able to feel it. Until you get the feel, just

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glance down; don't stare. You need to look where you're going.

With his body square underneath you, it's harder for your horse, and you, to lose control of his hips, even when traveling with speed. If he's not leaning into the circle, he's less apt to fall out of lead behind.

Stop and Start Over

If your horse falls out of lead behind, make a steady, straight stop—don't slam him into the ground, which could break his confidence about stopping. Rather, draw him into the ground for a soft, slow stop. Once he's stopped, get your horse squared up with the tips I mentioned in the previous section, and then walk or trot forward. If your horse still isn't quite square from the tip of his ears to the end of his tail, trot a few circles to work on that straightness. If he can't maintain straightness at a trot,

he certainly can't do it at a lope.

Once your horse is straight, ask for a lope again. Then build speed, and see what happens. If your horse falls out of lead again, start the drill over and repeat until he can complete a circle without changing leads behind.

Move His Hip

Once you've achieved straightness, continue working at a walk or trot. Use your outside foot, placed behind the cinch, to push your horse's hips to the inside of the circle as you come through the middle of the arena, almost sidepassing to the inside of the circle. This helps your horse listen to your outside leg. Success with this drill means that you could feel your horse start to change leads behind, but put your outside leg on and offer support to keep him in lead.

As a bonus, you'll achieve better



This is a great example of my horse being square between my reins and legs. Her body doesn't bulge out on one side or the other.

control over your horse's body, which is always beneficial. But I do caution: Don't overdo this exercise, because you don't want to swap your horse's leaning tendencies in the opposite direction.

Check Your Speed

Some horses just can't handle a high rate of speed, whether due to conformation or temperament. You must know your horse and accept his limitations. If this is the case for your horse, in the show pen I suggest playing it safe when it comes to your fast circles. Instead of trying to earn points in those maneuvers, work to stay clean and out of the penalty box. □



Kristi Berg, Temecula, California, is a lifelong horsewoman and native Californian. She's worked for top trainers, including Todd Crawford and

Pete Kyle, and now owns and operates Berg Performance Horses with her husband, Mike. The pair coaches non-pro riders and shows open horses in reining and cow horse events.



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"We started looking for a horse for my handicapped daughter, Kaylyn, by posting ads in equine groups on Facebook. A few miniatures and ponies came up, but none of them fit the bill just right for our daughter until Ariel came along. Ariel is a 16-year-old Paint pony that was brought into Horse Shoe Rescue as

a starved pony needing a forever home with a loving family.

She was just the right size for my daughters to ride and was the perfect rescue for us! When the cold winter weather finally warmed up enough to let us go out and meet her, there was an instant bond between Ariel and Kaylyn. Our handicapped daughter pet and talked to her and that pony lit up!

Ariel came home with us as soon as possible, and we began working on new fences for an arena and a barn for the ponies. Now, Ariel lives in the biggest part of the barn, is gaining weight nicely and has found a life of luxury. Soon, Ariel will go on to become Kaylyn's therapy pony to help improve balance, control, socialization and coordination. In the short amount of time that Ariel has been a part of our family, Kaylyn has learned to focus when feeding and leading this cute, little pony. It is heartwarming to see Kaylyn talking and smiling at Ariel each day, but it is even more rewarding seeing Ariel perk up whenever her little girl is around."

- Anna, Potomac, IL

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Then...He Bit Me!

You describe how and why you got bitten by a horse.

On the trail, our gelding had been hesitant. That evening, I felt his back for soreness. One-thousandth of a second later, his incisors slammed into my right hip. "Yes, I *am* sore."

Steve Nickel, Colorado

In with a group of horses, I used my foot to move some hay closer to a horse that didn't have any. Not liking this, Johnny whipped his head around and bit me on the butt—treating me like another horse.

Carolyn Holm, Minnesota

I was learning to cinch up my first horse, a 20-year-old Morgan mare. She was kindly and patient, but the third time I pulled the cinch up fast and hard—like the cowboys on TV—she reached over and grabbed my arm with her teeth. I never forgot the lesson.

Linda Lanzoni, California

While feeding, I got between my squabbling gelding and mare. He meant to bite her, but got my pinky instead—biting it to the bone.

Deb Kirkman, Indiana

I was selecting a 2-year-old to train. My dad went up to pet a filly I liked, and she nipped him on the butt. That's how we knew she was truly the one!

Megan D'Andrea, Ohio



As I was picking out our mare's foot, she turned her head and bit me on the hip. It was bruised for weeks (and I resolved never to buy another mare).

Jade Bartnicki, Utah

I was in the stall with our mare and her foal when the baby latched onto Momma a little too hard. The mare swung around to reprimand the foal and caught me instead—right where the zipper is in my jeans. Hurt like the dickens!

Erika Seybert, Pennsylvania

I reached over the fence to brush Queenie's withers. When I turned my back, she bit me right between the shoulder blades. I always believed she was returning the favor and "scratching" my withers. But, boy! did that hurt!

Brenda Nesbitt, Michigan

My mare was due to foal. As I squeezed her nipple for the umpteenth time, testing for milk, she reached around, grabbed me by my upper gluteus maximus, and flung me into the stall wall. Message received: no more testing.

Heidi Olds, Oregon

I was leading my daughter's pony, trying to get him to trot, when he bit me on the arm. Stopped me in my tracks!

Amy Strezinski, Ohio

Searching for treats, my gelding chomped the zipper of my jacket just under my chin. I had to cut myself out of that coat.

Julie Underwood, Kansas

I was preparing to bridle my pony to ride in my very first show. (Maybe he mistook my bright orange hair for a carrot!)

Maddie Lorenz, Indiana

Join in! In 50 or fewer words, tell us which part of being groomed your horse seems to enjoy most. Respond by March 15 to jfmeyer@aimmedia.com. Include your name/home state; put "You Said It/Grooming" in the subject line.

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¹ *A. perfoliata*

² Based on data provided on the ZIMECTERIN Gold product label

³ Based on data provided in FDA Freedom of Information summaries

⁴ Kaplan RM, et al. Prevalence of anthelmintic-resistant cyathostomes on horse farms. *J Am Vet Med Assoc.* 2004;225(6):903-910.

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